

HORSHAM AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY INC

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150KM FEAST SUMMARY FOR HRCC

The Challenges

After the series of lockdowns and changing rules around COVID in 2021, we ventured forth late in the year to see the return of the 150km Feast. After the success of the 2021 feast, it was with disappointment and at times despair, we watched the slow progress of ticket sales when the previous event sold out in 30 hours. Not to be defeated with the mantra of home being the safest place to be, we set about building the feast into another awesome event.

In the lead up to the event, we were presented with several ticketholders having to cancel due to contracting coronavirus or having to isolate. This led us to activate our covid related refund policy which added an extra layer of administration but it also left these guests greatly disappointed.

Volunteers who were rostered on to assist the five chefs in their restaurants/cafes in the lead up to the feast, also affected the management of the process, with them having to go into isolation.

We lost five volunteers on the day due, to isolation and five guests could not attend due to positive COVID tests.

Two days before the event, we were notified that Covid officers would be visiting our event, observing our processes. This added some unplanned pressure but we were confident our procedures were secure. However, confusion reigned amongst patrons who thought QR coding into the event was not necessary anymore. Other smaller challenges were met and dealt with immediately.

The Crowd

A total of 142 people attended the 150km Feast – six short of the target of 150. The weather was perfect and the feedback has been very positive. Guests came from Gnarwarre near Geelong (returned with friends), Brisbane (with friends from Donald), two tables were from the Western District – quite unrelated and 55 within the Horsham/Haven boundary! A third of the guests who attended the feast in 2021, thought it was worth returning for a second year.

While we were unable to get locations from each of the guests, as there were group bookings, this is a summary of places, guests came from:

Ararat
Aspendale Gardens
Ballarat Central
Byaduk
Cardigan
Casterton
Delacombe
Dimboola
Donald
Golden Point
Gnawarre
Great Western
Hamilton



Haven
Melbourne
Horsham
Kalkee
McKenzie Creek
Murtoa
Natimuk
Newington
Newtown
Quantong
Rainbow
Rupanyup
Scarsdale
Warrnambool



The entertainment & food

Dave McMaster returned from Geelong to play til 11pm, keeping the crowd on their toes.

The food was prepared by 5 local chefs:

Appetiser by Sharnee Lockhart from Gourmet Food & Flowers

Entrée by new resident from California, Vanessa Craig-Marsden (winner of a cooking show on USA TV) with food prepared in the kitchen of the Salvation Army.

Main by Stewart Neighbour from Stewart's Catering & Consulting and Bad Boy Burger Co

Desserts by Shannon Couch and Georgia Stone from the Capital Bistro.

As much produce as possible was sourced within 150km of Horsham, including the wine, boutique beer and gin cocktails.

A total of 45 local businesses within a 150km radius of Horsham were involved in the 150km Feast from olive oil to printing.

The outcomes

As a result of this second successful feast, it is clear the Wimmera region is a food and wine bowl! An English chef from the Albion Hotel in Casterton was a guest and was very keen to learn what we had going on. The chefs and I are going to the Albion in a couple of weeks to taste his dishes with the view to having him on the team of chefs next year.

Claire Morgan from Rupanyup Living Brownies who supplied chickpea flour grown on her farm, for the desserts, has begun dialogue with the Capital Bistro management to discuss having her brownie products on their menu.



Chef Vanessa travelled to Great Western to meet Anthony Kumnick of Great Western Granary who perfected the art of making tortillas from Burrum Biodynamics at Marnoo, for her entrée. Her dish, with a Mexican flavour was a highlight on the menu but not taking anything away from the other four courses which were all delicious.

Vineyard operators Mary & Gary Staehr from Mount Stapylton Vineyard both volunteered their time to work in the bar and serve tables. This gave them a hands-on opportunity to share stories of their wine to the guests, face to face.

Last year we connected with the multicultural community who volunteered their time to wait on tables. This year we were approached by the Holy Trinity Lutheran College who wanted to be part of the event. Hospitality students were invited to participate and nine said yes. One of the students was offered a part time job at the end of the night and the Horsham Ag Society is looking to employ several for a function we have coming up. The relationship built with this school will continue into the future and both organisations are very excited about this as it secures the future of volunteering in our precinct.



Jacqui Schulz from Albury and part time resident of Natimuk, offered to volunteer both as a member of the bar staff and also as event photographer. Her generosity came about by a chance meeting in the street! Serena Lange from the Barossa Valley and first year student at Longerenong volunteered in the week leading up to the event and became my PA in a variety of areas in addition to checking guests in, working in the bar and cleaning up after the event til beyond midnight! Another volunteer, a partner of one of our committee members, came from Ballarat to help wait on tables. Our own volunteers ranged in age from 17 to 92 and the average age of dish washers was 75!

To support and preserve our older volunteers we will most likely engage the services of the Apex Club or another service club, for future events.

Over recent years, we have accumulated a healthy supply of event accessories and decorating the venue and hanging chandeliers from arbours donated by the Parents & Friends Association of the Holy Trinity Lutheran School and other decorations donated by bridal parties who have enjoyed their weddings here, were definitely a highlight.



Old doors saved from building demolitions works at the Maydale Reserve were used to create a rustic atmosphere teamed with rusty chairs, bikes, preserving jars, timber blocks, old wooden sheep yard panels, the original turnstiles from the showgrounds and gum leaves. A canopy of festoon lights bought with funding from HRCC Events Grant made for a magical outdoor evening, complete with hessian drapes which provided shade before the sun went down. Umbrellas purchased for New Year's Eve were put to good use where the hessian failed to reach, enabling all guests to be shaded.

Thank you

The Councillors of the Horsham Agricultural Society would like to thank most sincerely the volunteers, sponsors, chefs and guests who made this second event such a success. It was a true community collaboration.

Respectfully submitted

ANDREA CROSS, Executive Officer, Maydale Reserve, HORSHAM AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

