



Preserving the rich history and traditions of Australia's working men and women.



Our Chairman, Harry Hauenschild, AO and C.E.O Bob Gleeson, on behalf of our Board Members & Staff, hope the gift of good health and happiness be with you this Christmas and throughout the coming year.



There is only one offspring from the Tree of Knowledge, which was planted at the Australian Workers Heritage Centre in May 2005, by the then Minister for Primary Industries, Hon. Henry Palaszczuk. The Tree is currently healthy and strong and has advanced to approximately two metres in height.

Our groundsman, Steve Kamerling provides continuous monitoring of the offspring and its safety, which is paramount and we do so in close consultation with professional advice and assistance from the D.P.I. Forestry Facility at Gympie.

Staff at the Forestry Facility at Gympie have taken cuttings from our offspring on site and are currently working towards propagating further offspring. Early reports in the success of propagating further offspring are very positive. The propagating will take some time and we would expect restricted numbers of offspring within the next two to three years.

We, currently working in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries Forestry Facility, the Queensland Government and the Barcaldine Shire Council are proceeding on a plan to propagate sufficient offspring in the first instance to plant at least two more offspring at our Centre and further sufficient offspring to allow the Queensland Government, on behalf of the people of our State to gift an offspring with an appropriate story board to each State and Territory in Australia.

The gifting of the offspring of the tree to every State and Territory in Australia placed in strategic locations would turn the negative of the poisoning of a National Icon to the positive and spread our history around the nation. To have an offspring of our Tree in the respective State and Territory in a strategic location or locations would give each State and Territory a sense of ownership of our History and an appreciation of it's National significance.

Our gifting proposal will ensure it is accepted and recognized nationally, and it will be done so in a bi-partisan manner (as it should be).

The events of 1891 and the meetings under the Tree of Knowledge were the watershed of a number of important National historical events, which includes The formation of the Australian Labor Party, the formation of the Pastoralist Union, the forming of the United Graziers Association, central to the formation of the Country Party (now the National Party) and the election of the first Labor Government in the world - Authentic events that played a central part in an important period of our National History and development.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to the Department of Primary Industries and staff at their Forestry Facility at Gympie and Mr Tony Rayner, Regional Director of D.P.I based in Longreach for their outstanding support for the Tree of Knowledge and the propagating of offspring in order to ensure the relevance of this National icon continues and is appreciated and understood by all Australians.

In terms of the future of the Tree of Knowledge site and surrounds in Barcaldine, we attended a meeting of the Barcaldine Shire Council recently at their invitation and put forward the Workers Heritage Centres' thoughts and suggestions, which very briefly in essence, are as follows;

The Tree of Knowledge deserves a fitting memorial and the region requires a timely boost in economic terms.

We would suggest that in 2009, when Queensland as a State, celebrates it's 150th Birthday, the gifting of our offspring to every State and Territory in Australia, coupled with the opening of a quality attraction that is both a fitting memorial to a National icon and the highlighting of a watershed of a significant part of our National history and development, would be an ideal time and an appropriate way, we can play an important and fitting part in celebrating our 150th Birthday, thus establishing an enduring, tangible, worthwhile public monument that we will all look upon with pride and satisfaction.

The project we propose would require strong leadership, the delegation of authority required for Government agencies to work in unison and the community and region, to proceed by way of a genuine bi-partisan partnership devoid of parochial or self interest.

Our next newsletter will be forwarded to you in March 2007

*A Message
from
John Purves,
Foundation
Board
Member*



John Purves & Grandchildren Joe & Isabella

Although born and bred in the bush and having travelled much of Queensland in my years with the Commonwealth Bank, I had never been to Barcaldine. In fact I was pretty ignorant of its fame and matters surrounding the significance of the Tree of Knowledge etc.

I found myself there in 1990, 100 years almost, after a number of events that were to be of great National historical significance. There in the Globe Hotel, I met Pat Ogden and Bob Gleeson. That was the beginning of an education. It was also my introduction to the, then proposed Australian Workers Heritage Centre and it launched my friendship with those two good fellows, our Chairman Harry Hauenschild and Rocky Ryan (now deceased) who we all miss with a great deal of sadness, but also an abundance of fond memories.

I was fortunate in meeting and working with many other people and forged friendships that are enduring.

My visit to Barcaldine was by chance. Another good friend and near neighbour, Des Power, invited me to share the driving on a trip to the west. He was going to Barcy in connection with some “Heritage” type development that was being planned. I just went along for “The Ride” so to speak. I was not aware that Des had been working on concepts for the proposed development, planned for opening in 1991.

Those few days in Barcaldine, when I was privileged to meet some of the legends of Outback Australia, including R.M. Williams and Randal Chandler, were to have a great influence on my life. Bob Gleeson offered me a position to assist with finance and to be a Jack of All Trades with the proposed Heritage Centre. That “Ride” has continued in varying roles to this day. Whilst day to day involvement has not been my role for some time, my interest in and enthusiasm for the operation continues as a Management Committee Member. One is always conscious of the need to support, but time and resources, and energy (or lack of) do tend to dictate ones involvement.

The Centre has always been administered by a small, dedicated team, led by Bob Gleeson. Bob has that capacity to seek out personnel for specific roles and engender loyalty and teamwork and in so doing, get the best result for the Centre. The benefits of that, for the individual, are the enduring friendships that develop. Personally, I could list many names, and I will mention a few as representatives of that group—Annette Gleeson, Phil Cowley, Wendy Johnston, Mary Yip, Alison Butcher and Pam Chan. And I would be remiss to overlook an ex-officio member of our administration, Carolyn Howie of the Victoria League.

There were tough times and they are still with us. Possibly the challenges we now face are the greatest of all. Our leader remains dedicated and visionary and one can only marvel at the energy and passion he displays. It is my hope that one day his dream is totally fulfilled and the Australian Workers Heritage Centre is nationally recognized as the attraction that reflects the real history of an era that shaped so much of this nations future.

John Purves.

“Possibly the challenges we now face are the greatest of all”



A Message from David Ronai

Hello, I'm David. And I'm pleased to be associated with the Australian Workers Heritage Centre and perhaps, assist the centre and Barcaldine in future.

Bob Gleeson has asked me to tell you a little about myself as I may be meeting some of you in the future.

Having been born, raised and lived in Broken Hill, N.S.W. till I was 30, the outback lifestyle and character of its people is familiar to me. In those days, I worked in the mining industry with CRA or Rio as it's now known, in the commercial part of the business.

And most recently, in the last 14 years, with Tourism Queensland, also on the commercial side.

And today, although I now live in Brisbane, I'd like to think that my character and personality still shows my outback origins.

But more than that, I believe the personal values, principled centred lifestyle and character of rural people have not only shaped our Australian Identity, but remain as relevant and vital today to shape future generations of Australians.

Whilst we take for granted personal qualities like mate ship, friendliness, sharing, perseverance and persistence; which originated in the outback as our collective shield against the forces of nature and the seasons, the fact remains these generational qualities have served the nation well in all other circumstances of trial and prosperity. And it seems to me, we need to preserve and promote the source of these Aussie qualities and identify by retaining self-sustaining and diversified rural communities.

Recently, when I visited Barcaldine, at the invitation of Bob Gleeson I was pleased to have had the opportunity to meet with the Shire Council, representatives of the Business Council, all staff at the Workers Heritage Centre and numerous other business people and local residents.

The shining star was the resilience of the people I met, though bowed by the impact of this terrible drought, with those wonderful qualities of friendliness and the sincerity of a firm handshake.

Whilst the Tree of Knowledge is all about our political origins through adversity and confrontation, it's more than that. It's about a way of life that underpinned that heritage and identity.

Clearly, the community that remains now needs to work together in finding ways and means to restore and promote the heritage and legacy that the locals have to offer city and tourist visitors alike.

I look forward to continuing my association with the Workers Heritage Centre and the Barcaldine community and assisting when I am able to do so.

Regards,
David

“The shining star was the resilience of the people I met”

*A Message from Anna Barrett,
Principal of our Education Centre*



Today's students, particularly in urban areas, live in and experience a fast-paced, technological society, where the traditions and heritage of Australia can often be forgotten. I believe it is vital that today's school students are aware of and experience the history of our great nation, particularly an understanding of our pioneering men and women.

We have a rich and unique national history, however today some students are leaving school with a repetitive and incomplete picture of their national story. For today's students to know who they are and where they are going, I think it is important for them to reflect on where they came from.

These experiences will allow students to reflect on what it means to be an Australian including our values, culture and identity. At the Wanpa-rda Matilda Centre this learning is through interaction and positive experiences rather than from textbooks.

The Wanpa-rda Matilda Centre is unique in terms of location and curriculum. For many students this may be their first and only experience in outback Australia. The first of its kind in Queensland, the centre is located in the picturesque grounds of the Australian Workers Heritage Centre. The facility provides the base from which to explore some of the 40 sites of educational significance identified in this truly unique region of Australia. Working closely with Education Queensland the centre provides comprehensive curriculum support to schools that visit the site.

Opened in May 1997, the Wanpa-rda Matilda Centre has been specifically designed to accommodate the needs of school children and their carers. The Centre houses 56 beds in dormitory style accommodation, state of the art kitchen and dining facilities and an outdoor recreation and BBQ facility. Wanpa-rda comes from the Wangkangurru people of the Birdsville district and means 'to carry'. Matilda comes from the Banjo Paterson song 'Waltzing Matilda' and refers to a bedroll or swag. So, Wanpa-rda Matilda means to carry your swag!

Just a day trip away are attractions such as the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, the Qantas Founders Outback Museum, Blackall Woolscour and Aquatic Centre and a host of other exciting educational sites. Students can experience life on a cattle station and other activities unique to the outback.

Our services and facilities include:

Modern air-conditioned accommodation and catering facilities; Full catering, if required; An on-site Education Officer providing full planning support, including assistance with designing an itinerary, all bookings, catering and local tours; Access to the Australian Workers Heritage Centre grounds, featuring picnic and BBQ facilities on the banks of the bore-fed billabong; Curriculum packages designed to maximise and enhance your students' Outback experience.

Coming to the Wanpa-rda Matilda Centre is doing school camps and excursions the easy way. We can organise and book the entire itinerary for each school, each experience educational and fun-filled, from breakfast to supper. The itineraries for each school varies depending on numbers, budget and curriculum needs. We take the time to individually tailor a package to suit the school's needs. We urge schools to consider the value of what the Wanpa-rda Matilda Centre can offer, including the overall educational benefit to their students and subsequent long term advantages such an experience will provide.



Wanpa-rda Matilda Outback Education Centre



If you would like further information in regards to the curriculum on offer or the itinerary that can be tailored to suit your school's needs, please phone Anna Barrett on 4651 2530, fax 4651 2531, visit the website www.wanpardaeec.eq.edu.au or email the.principal@wanpardaeec.eq.edu.au

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