

### Innovation in Special Events

This category recognises a special event produced and owned by a council in the 2018 calendar year. The special events entered could include business events (if applicable) e.g. conference, seminar or summit, cultural, art, music, community, sporting, tourism, commemorative and charity or because related events could also be entered for consideration. The event may be linked to a strategy or campaign but will be judged here as a stand-alone component. The event should demonstrate a clear outcome that it delivered excellence in fulfilling its intention. If an event is an annual event, it needs to show growth, change, innovation and demonstrate outcomes and any legacy.

All entries must be submitted online:

- The submission document itself should be equivalent to 2-4 pages addressing the judging criteria and a maximum of 5 MB.
- Minimum of two photos should be included no larger than 2 MB each.
- Attach examples of special event print collateral
- Maximum of four support documents

Entry is open to NSW councils and county councils who are members of LGNSW are eligible to enter. Entries close on Monday 3 June.

***To be eligible, submissions must address each criterion listed below:***

- 1. Clear and concise event brief describing the goals, situational analysis, audience, event plan and format and what the event is intended to deliver.**

### **GOALS / INTENTION OF DELIVERY**

The Big Scrub Rainforest Day is an annual community event celebrating the 'Big Scrub Rainforest' or lowland subtropical rainforest and aims to increase the community's awareness of: the local rainforest; our regions drinking water catchments; their place within the water cycle; biodiversity; and practical management options for undertaking landscape restoration.

The Big Scrub Rainforest Day is a truly engaging, entertaining and educational approach to inspire landholders and the general community to take action. What better way to reinvigorate people's connection to the land and bush than to invite them into the heart of the rainforest to breath its air and feel the ancient trees with their own hands.

### **AUDIENCE**

The event has evolved over its 20-year history and has grown into one of Australia's largest annual environment and community Landcare/land management events engaging with over 30,000 people and providing a focus for community involvement through engagement and education in a festival environment.

Established by Big Scrub Landcare and Rainforest Rescue in 1999, Rous County Council began co-presenting the event in 2001, when the event found its home at Rocky Creek Dam (the source of our regional water supply) where Rous County Council has been conducting pioneering restoration of lowland subtropical rainforest for over 30 years. The event is now co-presented by Rous County Council and Big Scrub Landcare.

### **SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

Rous County Council has three main functions: bulk water supply; weed biosecurity and flood mitigation. As the regional water supply authority, Council provides water to approximately 100,000 people in the local authority areas of Lismore, Ballina, Byron and Richmond Valley. All the key existing and proposed water sources of Council (Rocky Creek

Dam, Emigrant Creek Dam, and the Wilsons River Source) are located within the Big Scrub landscape. In this way, Rous County Council represents 'water from the Big Scrub rainforest.'

The quality of the water provided to Rous customers is partly dependent upon the quality of the water flowing to the extraction point from the respective catchment areas. The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) state that the most effective means of assuring drinking water quality and the protection of public health is through the adoption of a preventive management approach that encompasses all steps in water production from catchment to consumer. The catchment area forms the first barrier for the protection of the water supply.

In keeping with the 'catchment to tap' management approach recommended in the ADWG, Council has been conducting pioneering restoration of lowland subtropical rainforest for over 30 years, managing water in partnership with nature. Big Scrub restoration is considered critical for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the Big Scrub landscape, and important for our water future.

Rous County Council encourages landholders in our water catchment areas to protect and restore the Big Scrub – in this way landholders manage water in partnership with nature by helping to protect the health of our waterways, for the benefit of our local drinking water supply and the enhancement of biodiversity in the Big Scrub landscape.

This event provides a forum for connecting with the local communities that are actively engaged in this work and is Rous County Council's major annual community education and engagement event.

## **EVENT PLAN / FORMAT**

The 2018 Big Scrub Rainforest Day consisted of over 35 different activities including: guided bird, plant use & rainforest restoration walks; practical workshops & talks facilitated by some of Australia's leading ecologists, bush regenerators, naturalists & scientists; fabulous food & entertainment; information, displays & stalls; and fun environmental activities for the whole family.

## **2. A short description of strategy development, communication and stakeholder involvement.**

The event is organised with the assistance of local and regional community organisations and individuals. It has wide support (financial and in-kind) from Landcare groups, local government, local business and state government agencies.

Stakeholders involved in presenting the event include the Widjabul people of the Bundjalung Nation, leading ecologists, rainforest regenerators, naturalists, scientists and other professionals who share their professional expertise and volunteer their time in presentations, workshops, walks, talks and other activities. The event also engages with the target audience through a range of displays and stalls representing community groups, business, government departments, councils, Landcare groups and other organisations.

### **3. Summary of event funding, budget and revenue if applicable and available.**

The 2018 event raised **\$46,378.94** through revenue, grants and sponsorship and was delivered at a cost of **\$36,754.33** leaving a surplus of **\$9,624.61** to be carried forward to the 2019 event.

Participants attend the event at no cost.

### **4. Show communication methods and distribution outlets, use of innovation and differing communication tools and how they motivated their audience.**

#### **PROMOTION**

The event was promoted through: traditional print and radio media; roadside signage; printed programs distributed at targeted locations; websites and social media.

Businesses and organisations involved in presenting various activities at the event assist in the promotion by engaging with their own stakeholders to promote the event.

One example of this was Lismore City Council (LCC), who as one of the organisations involved in presenting various activities at the event, In 2018 assisted in promotion by featuring the event in their Local Matters newsletter (distributed to 20,000 homes across the LGA). The event is also promoted through the regional Landcare networks and other networks.

#### **USE OF INNOVATION AND DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND HOW THEY MOTIVATED THEIR AUDIENCE**

The event offers several different formats for the delivery of key messages. For example in 2018 a participant that was interested in bush regeneration had the choice to: sit in a theatre style venue and listen to a panel discussion on *Getting Started in Regeneration*; attend a presentation on Measuring ; participate in a practical workshop on *Tips, Tools & Techniques in Regeneration* with time for questions and answers; or attend a guided walk and talk with an industry professional.

### **5. Describe delivery of the event and its results.**

The event is delivered in two formats. Every even year the event is held at Rocky Creek Dam and consists of continuous talks, presentations, workshops and walks over several marquees in a festival style environment of stalls, food and entertainment. On the odd year the event is spread out across the Big Scrub (which overlaps with RCC's drinking water catchments) footprint, in a series of events at various locations including walks, talks and field visits.

The 2018 event consisted of 6 streams/marquees hosting over 35 activities including: featured presentations; restoration talks; practical land management workshops; creative

workshops; children's activities; community tree planting; and guided walks and talks. In addition, the event featured stalls, all day activities and entertainment.

Participants can look at the event program and plan which activities they will attend throughout the day. Participants usually spend the whole day at the event, attending several activities according to their individual interest and requirements.

The 2018 event had 3000 attendees. This brings the total number of attendees over the events 20-year history to 30,000.

## **6. Outline the innovation and legacy elements.**

The principal target audience for the event is landholders and land managers, as they are best placed to implement long-term restoration of subtropical rainforests. However, the nature of the event sees attendees come from a broad cross section of the community not just the target audience of landholders and land managers.

The event attracts local landholders and land managers as well as from further afield including as far north as the Sunshine Coast and as far south as the Coffs Coast.

The event has strengthened the relationship between Rous County Council and Big Scrub Landcare which has led to the establishment of additional education and engagement projects including the *Big Scrub Rainforest: a journey through time* book and the third edition of the *Rainforest Restoration Manual*. Other partnership projects include extensive on-ground works in rehabilitation and restoration, enabled through the successful awarding of grants.

[Keynote presentations](#) and [important workshops](#) have been filmed and made freely available [online](#) providing an ongoing education and engagement tool.

## **7. Outline the sustainability and accessibility elements if appropriate.**

Rous County Council follows the guidelines in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) *Waste Wise Events Guide*. Food vendors are accepted based upon their commitment to sustainability and the use of environmentally friendly packaging and serving ware. Stone and Wood Brewing Company attended the 2018 event and beer was sold in returnable and reusable cups. All other food vendors used recyclable cups, plates and cutlery.

North East Waste was engaged to determine the bin requirements for the event. Bins were hired from Lismore City Council (red, yellow and green) along with the appropriate signage for waste wise use of the bins. Bins were placed strategically throughout the event to encourage proper use.

This event meets the objectives of [Rous County Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 17/18-20/21](#). Specifically, the event supports *Principle 6: Public Events* which encourages practices are reviewed to ensure preference is given to accessible venues and consider principles of equity and inclusion so that everybody can participate in public events.

## **8. Describe evaluation methods and results.**

A participant event survey was promoted at the event with 6 prizes to the value of \$50 drawn for survey participants. The survey asked participants about their level of knowledge prior to and post event. In addition, the survey asked participants about their commitment to implementing management options learnt at the event for long-term restoration of lowland subtropical rainforest. Further participants were asked to list topics they would like to find out more about at future events.

A total of **46** surveys were completed.

**98** percent of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed (as opposed to strongly disagree, disagree or neutral) that the event was: overall a very successful event ; improved my knowledge and understanding about the importance of protecting and restoring lowland subtropical rainforest; promoted ways you can get involved in the protection and restoration of lowland subtropical rainforest; provided a range of walks, talks, workshops and activities available were relevant and useful; improved my knowledge and understanding about how to approach weed control and apply bush regeneration techniques; information stalls available were relevant and useful; and venue and catering were suitable.

Further, **82.5** percent of survey participants said they will be using the knowledge learnt at the event to undertake restoration, regeneration or revegetation.