



In 2010, over 200 volunteers took part in the Dirt n Dust Festival, not bad for a small town population of 1200, these volunteers came from Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville, but the majority came from Julia Creek.

We recognised our volunteers by having 'Planning Nights' where we got input from them in regards to their ideas, in addition to having novelty prizes to keep them enthusiastic. On a continued basis we promote the success of the event on the amount of work done by volunteers.

We believe the volunteers are the reason for the success of winning the prestigious award for the Best Festival event at the Queensland Tourism Awards and receiving highly commended at the Australian Tourism Awards.

We try to always provide positive experiences for our volunteers and reward them by supplying a volunteer uniform and celebration BBQ, in addition to publically promoting their worth at all times.

Many volunteers live and work in the region and are able to represent a broad section of the community including children and youth; land and environment; commercial business; education; rural and agriculture; and sport and recreation.

The many facets of the event are designated as portfolios to various committee members. Delegation of roles and responsibility ensures consistent, knowledgeable and efficient responses can be provided to suppliers and potential customers.

Other examples of involving our volunteers include:

- Invitations to attend planning meetings and provide input
- Other community groups and charitable organisations welcomed to join the Festival
- Promote the value of the event in relation to social interaction and professional development
- Create and contribute to a positive environment for volunteers through training
- Appropriate recognition of volunteers through sponsorship of uniforms and name badges
- Involvement in post event debrief
- Maintain a focus of community engagement and ownership throughout the year

The Dirt n Dust Festival secured \$79,855 from the Queensland Government's *Blueprint for the Bush* program for an "**Our Place Our Future**" two year training initiative for all volunteers from the immediate and surrounding regions.



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The program was named **BULL** – *Brilliant Useful Lifetime Learning* and was achieved by attending the **COW** – *Community Opportunity Workshops*. 75 local residents took part in the program which has already created significant benefits, such as:

- Expanded leadership base
- Positive opportunities for the young and the mothers in the community to learn additional skills that provide a sense of worth and contribution
- Community that is proactive not reactive
- More effective community organisations
- Increased skills, increased professionalism, greater retention of skilled workers, increased local capacity, pathways for future employment, stronger more sustainable community with strong skills bank



Story submitted by Margie Ryder, Event Manager, Dirt n Dust Festival



Photos

1. Robbie Ivers in Richmond who volunteered to give our guests a talk along the way to the Festival
2. Volunteer Wendy Lacey who came up from Brisbane
3. Michelle Sollitt & Daughter Jessica Sollitt - Local volunteers
4. Planning committee
5. Volunteer Nicole Morris who comes up from Cairns every year to help oversee our medical team
6. Troy Cassar-Daley and Volunteers
7. Planning committee
8. Volunteer Fred Snider from Charters Towers

2011 Dirt & Dust Festival

15th, 16th & 17th April

QUEENSLAND TOURISM AWARDS 2009 Winner



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