

## Report on Media Launch Day for Penrith Council's REAL Festival

27th Sep 2016 at Trench Reserve, Regentville

On Tuesday morning at the Shed, about 9 members took care of unloading the Council truck which had delivered more disposable pallets for our future use. This was followed by loading the truck with selected pieces of pallet 'furniture' that were to be taken to the Trench Reserve (named after colonial Capt Watkin Trench) venue.



This festival will be the Council's inaugural attempt at providing an event of this type. REAL is the acronym for this festival, namely **R**iver, **E**nvironment, **A**rt and **L**ifestyle. The media launch was intended to publicise the formal festival scheduled to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of Nov in this locale. Today's session was to occupy about one hour between 11am and noon.

At the venue, the Council's event organisers were busy setting up for the day's activities. This was in a grassed clearing of the Reserve, on the eastern bank of the Nepean River, immediately south of the M4 overpass. Soon after unpacking 'our' stuff and setting it in place, the local party hire company were setting up shade umbrellas. About half-a-dozen members had gone directly to the Reserve, and together, we were a conspicuous 'blue brigade'.

Council had hired a professional photographer for the day, and Shed members took their own pictures. Three catering vehicles arrived, took their allocated places, and began setting up their operations. We were somewhat amused to watch the main caterer setting up in the large, side-opening shipping container, carefully fitted out with a professional looking commercial kitchen. The whole vehicle was colour themed and decorated with murals. A large sign announcing *Kanafeh* was emblazoned across the back wall of the kitchen and they promoted themselves as offering middle eastern food. A staff of 4 worked behind the serving counter; one taking the order, another presenting the finished product to the customer. The other two took care of 'constructing' the food. Their whole demeanour was light hearted and friendly, and the food was delicious. There was one choice; a dessert item served in a waxed paper pie tray. The main ingredient had a custard consistency, liberally sprinkled with what looked like a form of nutmeg, topped with some crushed nuts or seeds. These morsels went through a pizza oven to warm them before being liberally wetted with a thin, sugary syrup. Eaten with a spoon, the whole experience was both entertaining and tasty.



Another caterer – *Vejoes Kitchen* – was a portable kitchen mounted on the back of a small truck, and run by two or three staff. Their offering was a spoonful of cooked rice and a sweet pumpkin, accompanied by a small dollop of yoghurt sprinkled with a semi-sweet condiment and served on a piece of lettuce leaf.

The third caterer was a novelty arrangement called *Bike 'n Blend* who offered 3 or 4 fruit juices ... but the trick was, you had to blend these to a drinkable state by pedalling a specially adapted, one-wheeled bicycle for several minutes. The spinning front wheel drove a mechanism above it which held a blender jug mounted in front of the 'rider'. Members said the blended juice was a delight to drink. There was no charge for any of the food on offer.

After a substantial address by the Deputy Lord Mayor Trish Hitchen thanking those involved, etc – we mingled among the several councillors in attendance and media folk. There was a healthy interest in our organisation. By about 12:30 or so, we'd dismantled our display, loaded the truck and set off for the Shed to unpack and store it all.