

THE 6th NHMA NATIONAL TRACTOR TREK NARRANDERA MARCH 16-19th 2016

The 2016 NHMA Tractor Trek was hosted by the Riverina Vintage Machinery Club and the Urana Vintage Machinery Club in Narrandera NSW from 16-19th March 2016.

Feedback from the participants, Narrandera Shire Council, the local community, visitors and the committee revealed an event which proved a successful partnership from all involved.

It was a great financial stimulus to the community of Narrandera.

The entries for this event exceeded the previous treks with 146 tractors registered.

Because of the large numbers involved the committee decided to run two treks to assist traffic management and to ensure safety. Approximately 70 tractors, with support crews, officials, the catering gang, a total of over 100 members were involved on each of the two treks which were run at the same time.

The weather was so different for each day. The first hot, the second wind and rain and the third sunny and fresh. Everyone adjusted to the conditions with some of the 'muddy' ones on the second day, having a big smile.

The treks were very different with the trek to Square Knob, the highest point in the Narrandera area, being a challenging course and the trek to Berembled Weir a flat course, running beside the outflows of the Murrumbidgee River.

The Square Knob trek was staged, with 15 tractors at a time being sent to the top and officials monitoring the course to ensure safety was paramount. A relay type system was then in place as tractors traversed the course like a single lane bridge movement to ensure safety.



On the way to Square Knob the morning tea was at the historic Lake Midgeon Shearing Shed. In 1938 it was reputedly the largest shearing shed in New South Wales.

The Berembled Weir trek was completely different, a picturesque trail to a river view amongst gum trees. The second day, when torrential rain and wind forced the trek back to Narrandera, morning tea was endured under a very small marquee reportedly borrowed from a bloke in Jerilderie. A morning of many laughs, and positive reports on the rain, made up for the lack of sunshine. The road into the Weir was a quagmire, not for the tractors but for the support crew vehicles, particularly the 'chuck wagon'. A dry lunch was held back in the showground hall.

Berembed Weir is the main offtake for diverting water into the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA). Many commodities benefit from the irrigation including the wine, rice, cotton and citrus industries who export from the Riverina Region.

Each trek swapped over for the two days and on the Saturday over 90 tractors presented for the street parade, for the John O'Brien Festival. What a wonderful representation of the NHMA, showing the community the many types of vintage machinery that really made the day. One local commenting 'the best street parade in the 22 years of the John O'Brien'.



The third and last trek on the Saturday was a combined trek of 117 tractors. This was a trek on the back roads and therefore presented no problems for the local traffic and highways.

A tribute to the organising committee led by Ian Sneddon & Phil Horwell. Tim Langley – President of the Riverina Vintage Machinery Club and Kevin Elphick – President of the Urana Club were heavily involved with their members who assisted with organising and contributing to the success of the 6th NHMA Tractor Trek.

A special thank you to the catering, clean up, washing up and everything else 'up' crews. This was led by, Sue Langley, Robyn Guymer, Robyn Horwell and many other members of both clubs. Members of the Corowa club also assisted.

A special thank you goes to the Mayor of Narrandera, Councillor Jenny Clarke, who is a member of The Riverina Vintage Machinery Club. No slouch at serving a mean breakfast and using a tea towel! Thank you.

A brief summary of the event:

- 146 tractors entered for the 6th NHMA National Tractor Trek
- Over 70 tractors on each trek for the first and second days
- Over 200 people involved
- Over 90 tractors participated in the street parade
- 117 tractors on the combined trek on day three
- Catering for 12 meals over the event
- Entrants from Qld, NSW, Vic, Tasmania and South Australia

- Tractors entered included 40 Chamberlain, 28 Massey Ferguson, 20 Grey Fergies, 12 International and many others David Brown, John Deere, Fordson, Farmall, Fiat, Porsche, Bulldog, Allis Chalmers and Ford.



It was also a significant occasion for several of the entrants in the 6th National Tractor Trek. Rod Jones, Wayne Stuart and Lyle Constance (pictured) have participated in all of the six national treks, and we congratulate them.

Mike Connors who had also been there for the previous five events passed away before this year's event.

What a wonderful moment when his wife Maureen, his son Tim, grandson Cameron and daughter in law Jodie, were present at the trek.

Tim and Cameron (pictured) drove a tractor in his memory.



This event was successful because of a hard working committee and of participants who were prepared to enjoy themselves. They travelled from far and wide to meet others who were prepared to make the experience worthwhile.

A big thank you to everyone who made their way to Narrandera. May you have fond memories – we certainly have!