



Funding for this project was contributed to by Wimmera PCP as part of their Small Grants Program

Project Name: Nhill Lake February Fiesta Fridays
Year: 2015
Lead Agency: Hindmarsh Shire Council
Partners: West Wimmera Health Service, community organisations & local businesses

Project Description:

The Nhill Lake *February Fiesta Fridays* were a series of fun, family-friendly events held over each Friday night in February 2015. In its second year, the Fiestas provided a low-cost night for families, utilising the existing facilities and atmosphere of the picturesque Nhill Lake. Organisers hoped the 2015 event would build on the capacity of the community and inject 'community spirit' back into a town that has struggled with drought and hardship.



Each Fiesta had a different theme with live music, children's activities and food stalls to match. The first week was an old fashioned country fair with country and blues music. The second a rock 'n' roll night, the third incorporated a live duck race and auction while the fourth night – Corroboree night had a multicultural flavour with indigenous dancers, a Cajun influenced band and delicious food from Nhill's Karen community.

The Fiesta Organising Committee consisted of a small band of enthusiastic volunteers. A Wimmera PCP small grant funded a variety of children's activities including a Teddy Bears picnic (with fresh fruit), face painting, a sand castle mountain (with buried toys) and Chinese lantern painting. Nhill Kindergarten helped organise children's games and activities, while Hindmarsh Shire's Youth Worker coordinated the children's lantern painting.

Other healthy fun activities included a conga dance, hoopla hoops, Coney Island photo booth and a night lantern walk around lake. The Duck race night and duck auction (30 ducks) raised funds for the Nhill Lake Committee of Management to improve the lake and its amenities to increase community usage. West Wimmera Health Service promoted a *Sun Smart* education campaign targeting teenage attendees. Nhill Free Press provided free advertising and features for the Friday Fiestas. Events (with entry by donation) were promoted through local community newsletters, billboards, unique retro style posters and a Community Facebook page (this was found to be a great way to engage local people). The Friday Fiestas were also supported by local food businesses including food vans with organic/biodynamic meats and homemade pizzas.

Crowds exceeded all expectations – with 500 people attending each night. In recognition of the significant contributions by its volunteers, the Nhill Fiesta committee is now the proud recipient of the **2015 Volunteering Western Victoria Award** (*Creative Communities category*). The 2015 February Fiestas succeeded in bringing the



community together to celebrate and share *good food, good times and good music!*