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Woodford Folk Festival's triumphant return heralds a new Director

The welcome return of the Woodford Folk Festival saw an aggregate attendance of over 120,000 people attend the six day event. The record Box Office for the celebration has solidified the future of the event with organisers already planning the 2023 celebration – with a new Director at the helm.

Festival Founder and Director Bill Hauritz was vocal in his thanks to the Queensland Government and Moreton Bay Regional Council.

“2022 was a very difficult year, after an absence of three years we really wanted our patrons to know how important the contributions of these governments are. At the festival's welcome ceremony, Woodfordians showed their generous gratitude to both Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk and Mayor Peter Flannery.” said Hauritz.

“Without the support from both the Queensland Government and the Moreton Bay Regional Council we would never have been able to return the festival after the Covid years,” said Hauritz.

In his traditional New Year's Day address at the festival, Hauritz told an 800-strong audience that the return of the event after a two-year hiatus was the perfect moment to announce a change in leadership.

Woodfordia Inc has appointed its General Manager, Amanda Jackes, as Woodford Folk Festival Director and Woodfordia Inc's Managing Director after Hauritz formally stepped down at the end of February.

Hauritz founded the not-for-profit organisation (now called Woodfordia Inc) in 1985 and went on to found the festival (then called Maleny Folk Festival). In 1987 he led the move to what was a degraded 200ha former dairy farm outside the town of Woodford in 1994. It was the first festival in Australia to purchase its own land.

The Christmas/New Year festival was his 35th as Festival Director.

Hauritz is regarded as a visionary in the Australian festival landscape, with many elements of modern festival having been delivered through innovations at early Maleny and Woodford festivals. The multi- genre, multi-venue festival experience which embraced Indigenous culture provided a platform for key issues to be debated was revolutionary at the time.

“Bill is an original thinker whose innovation in festivals broke the mould of what a festival was. He invented a festival experience which has been copied everywhere and forever changed festivals in Australia and beyond,” said Jackes.

“Bill has been an inspiration to work with,” said Jackes. “He is a creative powerhouse whose vision is beyond our lifetime. His commitment to leaving a rich and beautiful legacy to our future generations can be clearly seen in his penmanship of the organisations 500 Year Plan,” Jackes went on to say.



“From 1985 to 2023, Bill Hauritz along with thousands of Woodfordians, volunteers and staff created the festivals, forests and lakes - the unique wonderland of Woodfordia,” said Jamie McKew, Founder Port Fairy Folk Music Festival and Woodfordia Inc Management Committee member.

“That is where musicians, writers, artists share stages with scientists, environmentalists, authors, politicians and even festival directors. There is no other festival with such a broad palette.” McKew said. “Bill Hauritz had the vision, courage, inspiration, and wisdom along with faith in humanity to walk the tricky trails for 35 years to lead the creation of Woodfordia,” acknowledged McKew.

Described as a pathological optimist, Hauritz’s determination and vision has delivered to Queensland one of its major cultural assets.

Hauritz’s contribution to music and the arts has been recognised locally and internationally. A recipient of the prestigious Queensland Smithsonian Fellowship, which took him on a study of festivals in the USA and Canada for four months, Hauritz was appointed as a member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the National honours list; is a recipient of the Myer Prize for outstanding contribution to performing arts; was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from Queensland Music Industry, recognised as a Queensland Great by the Qld Government and inducted as an Honourary Senior Fellow at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Jackes welcomed the opportunity of continuing to work with Hauritz in her new role, “Bill remains as passionate as ever about Woodfordia and will continue on as Vice President and take the opportunity to put his energy into some new exciting projects.”

In his announcement at the festival, Hauritz said: “We are extremely fortunate to have someone of Amanda’s calibre to take the festival into a new and exciting era. Having worked with Amanda for more than 30 years – 22 of them with her as General Manager – I am thrilled that she has accepted the offer of the role from our management committee. Amanda is a co-founder of Woodfordia – her contribution across the organisation has been immense,” said Hauritz.

“She is always brimming with excitement and ideas for the festival, which we reckon is only about halfway to achieving our vision for it” he continued.

In accepting her role as the head of the organisation, Jackes said it was “an honour”.

“Woodfordia is a special place because of all those who have gifted their ideas and time over many years. It is a place of innovation and incubation across the arts, humanities and environment.”

“We have such golden opportunities because of our tremendous community of patrons, volunteers, artists and enthusiasts.”

“We live in challenging times when people are experiencing high levels of disconnection and anxiety,” she continued.

“It is vital we look to bring hope, joy and connection with others into people’s lives. The opportunity to work together as a community, and to be uplifted by the artists and presenters reflecting on our times through their art is as powerful catalyst for hope, joy and inspiration. This gift has been handed down through all cultures, and is core to our lore and celebration at Woodfordia.”

President of the Woodfordia Inc Management Committee, Lachlan Brown, said he was delighted with the appointment and looked forward to working with Jackes.



“She brings a rare set of creative and organisational skills to the table,” he said.

“Combine that with her absolute love for our festival, land and organisation, and we are very fortunate to have her in the role.” said Brown.

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