



MEDIA RELEASE

Welcome to Berriwillock

Outside of the Mallee, not many people had heard of Berriwillock until last Tuesday. But when a pioneering young woman steered a six year old gelding first past the post in the Melbourne Cup, Australia and those around the world who had tuned in to the winners presentation were about to have their ears pricked. Darren Weir, premiership winning trainer and current leader of both the Victorian Country and Metropolitan premierships had just tasted his biggest success. Weir, a self proclaimed “bushie” whose all-conquering team of thoroughbreds has dominated country and city racing, was grasping the famous Loving Cup trophy worth six figures.

“Cheerio to all those folk in Berri, it’s one for you guys”, uttered Weir in his always honest fashion.

Berriwillock, “Berri” to the locals, sits between Wycheproof and Sea Lake in the Mallee on the Calder Highway 330 kilometres north west of Melbourne. The small town in the Buloke Shire is home to some 200 people and is renowned as a wheat growing and farming community and the Melbourne Cup winning trainer calls this town home.

Small town, sure, but Berriwillock is no shrinking violet. It is a place built on resilience. Young men and women carrying on the work of generations past. It is notable for how a positive legacy from its history links to those who now work the land and call “Berri” home. They are wholly invested in their community. This is a community that in every sense of the word, works. Be it on your own land, with the CFA, a community group or pulling together on a community project. Even events like the Civic Reception held for Darren Weir do not just happen. A team of twenty or more locals banded together after the “correct weight” signal went up to plan the celebration.

Like the equine star of this story, Prince of Penzance, who overcame two joint surgeries and a twisted bowel, the last few years have not been easy for Berriwillock. Two years of drought conditions and three seasons of poor or failed crops have impacted Berriwillock heavily.

However, Berriwillock farmers typify the hard working nature of the Mallee custodians. They have taken an innovative and adaptable approach to climate change. They are resilient and committed in the face of significant challenges to farming, their main economic driver. Their young farmers are the absolute strength of the community.

On the weekend of 12 and 13 March next year, Berriwillock will come together to celebrate 125 years. Whilst many “Back To’s” are held around the country each year, “Berri” is going “Back to the future”. This attitude sums up this Mallee community perfectly. It’s hard working history rings true with today’s generation to ensure its future for generations to come.



End release

For further information contact Travis Fitzgibbon on 1300 520 520