



The 15th Anniversary - and final - *Dinner under the Stars* on Saturday 4 March 2017 was forced undercover once again - but, judging by the feedback from guests, everyone had a great night and the evening was still a huge success!

The committee waited until 3pm on Saturday afternoon hoping the rain would stop and, when it didn't, the decision was made to move indoors. After months of planning for an event under the stars, the two eight two eight committee members were initially disappointed, but the delicious meal by **Relish Catering** and the entertainment by **The Three TenOz** from Sydney more than made up for the lack of stars!



The logistics of organising an event like this in a town the size of Gulargambone, where we have limited resources at our fingertips, are enormous, and there are many people to thank for the success of the evening. It was a magnificent team effort spread over several months. Dividing up the jobs meant everyone 'did their bit' and made the whole event manageable. Thank you to our dedicated committee members who made it all happen: **Sara Roche, Alison Tancred, Annie Haling, Deidre Walker, Leona Terry, Kirsty Fisher, Colleen & Paul Ower** and **Annette & Paul Fisher**. Other volunteers who helped in many different ways pre and post event (including setting up and/or cleaning up, loading or unloading Adors equipment, hanging lights, sourcing auction items and making bon bons) were **Sally Beveridge, Toni Fuller, Katie Rowe, Nicole Williams, Greg O'Brien, Cath Peart, Jenny Anderson, Bernadette Frazier, Valda Glen, Carolyn Lyons, Donna Patrick, Col Ryan, Willy Redington, Kay Clark, Anne Graham, Michelle O'Brien, Gai-Maree Younghusband, JB Tancred, John McIsaac, Mick O'Brien, Clive & Irene Longbottom, Ann & Bob Wyers, Jan & Graham Funch** and **Mary Roche**.



Over 380 guests attended the black tie event which meant the group had to be split when it rained. 75 of our younger guests sat inside two eight two eight with the rest seated in the Memorial Hall. MC for the evening **Ash Walker** welcomed everyone and each table received a gift of bottles of wine and mineral water donated by **Vittoria**. Guests enjoyed a three-course meal prepared by caterer extraordinaire Treen White from **Relish Catering**. The meal featured an entree with a choice of Slow Cooked Pulled Pork on Chilli Apple 'Slaw' or Peri Peri Prawns with Chargrilled Corn and Black Bean Salsa with Smoky Mayo. The lamb cuts for the main course were donated by **Roger Fletcher** of **Fletcher International**. Guests could choose between Rack of Lamb with Lemon, Basil & Pinenut Risotto with Roasted Cherry Tomatoes or Twice Cooked Duck with Blood Plum Sauce served with Fragrant Rice all served with bowls of seasonal vegetables. An array of desserts followed including Chocolate & Raspberry Mousse Cups, Tunisian Orange Cakes with Marscapone & Pistachio, Baby Melting Moments and Cheese Boards served with dried fruit, quince paste & crackers. Vittoria's very own baristas then handed out cups of Vittoria Coffee.



The main entertainment for the evening was a trio known as the "The Three TenOz" provided by *Singers for Hire, Australia*, a talented group of professional singers who specialise in a unique blend of musical entertainment. We were very fortunate to have Blake Fischer, who has sung at our previous dinners, return as part of the trio. Blake, whose career began at the age of 20 in *My Fair Lady* in Brisbane, has performed all over the world, including the Sydney Opera House, London Covent Garden and Paris to name but a few. Blake can now add the Gulargambone Memorial Hall and two eight two eight to that long list!

Laced with their ability to interact fully with the audience and perform with impeccable comic timing, this year the singers took us on a musical journey from Venice to Vegas including an appearance from Elvis himself, as well as songs from opera and musicals including 'Star' from *Les Miserables*, and 'I did it my way', to name but a few!

Guests also enjoyed live music courtesy of **Brad Haling** and some photo action at Happy Booth.



### **Pauline Hammond, Lee Hamilton & Leah Hammond**

very capably co-ordinated the delivery of the meals to the tables. Thank you to **Grant Millgate, Dwayne (Elvy) Hammond, Cody Newton, Raigen Carter, Milla Banks, Sasha Hammond** and **Tahlia Newton**, the student waiters from Gulargambone Central School. You were a credit to your school and to your families! It was a long night but a great opportunity to watch and learn from working with a professional catering team. That experience will stand you in good stead when applying for a job later in life. Congratulations to you all!

We were very pleased that many of our major sponsors were able to join us for the night: Platinum Sponsor **Vittoria Coffee** represented by Marketing Manager **Peter Engesser** and his wife Anita and **Simon Creswick** a regular guest, travelled from Sydney and brought six staff members who also helped on the night.



Regular Gold Sponsor **GrainCorp** was well represented at the dinner while **Inland Petroleum** was represented by **Paul McCallum, Dubbo City Toyota and Gilgandra Toyota** by **Mark Walker** and his wife **Jodie**, and **WJ Matthews, Moree** by **Liam McCormick** and his wife **Mary-Kate**.

Local auctioneer **Paul Alchin** did a brilliant job encouraging all to dig deep to support our small community project. Thank you to everyone who purchased auction items - we really appreciate your generosity. **Halcroft & Bennett, Coonamble** purchased the major live auction item: a dinner for 20 that will be catered for by two eight two eight's volunteer chef Cath Peart, while the lucky door prize was won by **Julie Forsyth**, one of two eight two eight's regular supporters. The winner of the major prize in the bon bons: An overnight stay at Billabong Camp Taronga Western Plains Zoo for 2

Adults & 2 Children includes dinner and breakfast plus 2-day Zoo entry donated by **Taronga Western Plains Zoo** was won by **Elizabeth & Mick McAllister** from Gilgandra.

We were pleased to see all our regular supporters from Warren, Coonamble, Gilgandra, Dubbo, Moree, Cowra, and Mudgee and thanks to **Toni Fuller** for co-ordinating the buses from Dubbo. It was



great to see several former residents back in town for the dinner: **Dennis Radin** and his wife **Lois** (Bathurst), **Tom & Sue Ryan** (nee Shepherd from Cowra), **Bill Waugh** (Mudgee), **Mary Roche** (nee O'Brien, Sydney) and an international flavour was added by **Jacky Davis** visiting from England.

A movie of the last 15 years featuring most of the 200 volunteers who have been involved with two eight two eight since the beginning was screened, and a quick head count showed that many of the guests at the dinner have volunteered with the project at some stage, so thanks to all our local Gulargambone friends and supporters!

One of two eight two eight's proudest achievements has been the involvement of students from Gulargambone Central School in the project. This initiative was started in 2006 by Nicole Williams



(pictured), a former teacher at the school, who suggested bringing her hospitality students to two eight two eight for one afternoon a week. That grew to one full day each week where the students ran the cafe on their own. In 2009 two eight two eight established the first of four Traineeships in Hospitality and Tourism. The first trainee Brandon Hammond was going to drop out of school in Year 10. He was offered a traineeship which meant he stayed on at school till Year 12 and completed his HSC. He now has a full-time job at Gulargambone Central School, while their second trainee Rorey

Millgate works at Gulargambone Pre-School.

When our only female trainee Kiara Reid started at two eight two eight she was very shy and lacked confidence and Principal Michael Spora commented "It was such a pleasure to hand Kiara the School Captain's badge for 2016 and to watch her grow and develop into the confident young lady she is today".

The fourth trainee Grant Millgate, Rorey's younger brother, completed his traineeship early and is currently school captain for 2017. On the night of the dinner Mr Spora introduced Tahlia Newton, our **fifth** Gulargambone Central School student.

Tahlia (pictured below in the front row on the right) is in Year 10 and hopes to work in the hospitality industry when she leaves school. This year's dinner made a total profit of \$27,000 which will go towards Tahlia's traineeship. You will all be pleased to know that Tahlia has already started her traineeship and is very excited and grateful for the opportunity, so thank you



everyone who has supported us, not only this year, but over the last 15 years! We hope you feel your money was well spent when you see the outcomes for these young people.

Mr Spora added "The traineeships at two eight two eight have changed these students' lives. In addition, Brandon's mother, Pauline, applied for an Adult Hospitality traineeship which she completed in 2014 and is now employed in the two eight two eight cafe, a significant achievement in a town with limited employment opportunities".

On Monday morning a presentation was made at Gulargambone Central School to all the students who helped at the dinner.

And, finally, thank you to all our sponsors:

Platinum: **Vittoria Coffee.**

Gold: **Graincorp, Dubbo Regional Livestock Markets, Hino and Landmark.**

Silver: **Fletcher International and Taylors Wines.**

Bronze: **AMPS, Inland Petroleum, Dubbo City & Gilgandra Toyota, Coggan Wool, Reliance Credit Union, Tyreright Gilgandra, Western Farm Machinery, WJ Matthews, Moree, Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo Mowers & Chainsaws, Kings Hall Jewellers.**

Twilight: **GK & LH Rohr, Boyce Accountants, Paul Job Insurance Services (WFI), Priceline, Pharmacy, Dubbo, Old Bank Restaurant, Coonamble Aero Club, Joe & Judy Shalhoub, Di & Dave Brennan, Alison Dent, Greg O'Brien, Dirt Thirsty Art (Natasha Walker), Bella Casa Homewares, Adors Hire, MH Thomas.**

Star: **Bob Jane T-Mart, Elias & Noah Millgate, Dubbo Regional Theatre & Convention Centre, Moorambilla Voices, Gulargambone Bowling Club, Dubbo Culinary & Homewares, Old Bank Music Shop, Swish Gallery, Sue Bennett, Alison Tancred, Nicole Johnstone, Jackie Walker, Rosie Turnbull, MaxSave Chemist Gulargambone, Amanda Colwell, Murrungundy Pistachios, Jacky Davis, Macdonald & Co Woolbrokers, Steve & Jenn Baldwin, Tooraweenah Crossroads Oil, Naughty Goat Products, Meekz Contemporary Jewellery, Wood Shed Slab Furniture, Global Village Cafe and Restaurant, Coonamble, Officeworks, Dan Murphy, Stacey Thomas, Stephanie Jurd, Sarah Ball, Jen Cowley, Ewe Two on Dandaloo, Sleepy Jays (Kerry Imrie) and Mink & Me.**

Donations were also received from **Jenny & Neil Anderson, Louise & Kevin Keady, Mark & Robyn Coulton, Kevin & Lindy Humphries, Anna Greenep & Scott Chambers, Cath & Dave Peart, Grant & Penny Zell, Julie Forsyth & Ian Smith, Kerry & Bob Imrie, Peter & Sandra O'Brien, Bill & Gill Waugh and Cate & Craig Whiteley.**

It is sad that this was our final dinner, but, looking back, it is really quite remarkable that this project, started by a visionary committee in 2001, has remained as a volunteer-run organisation in Gulargambone (population 400), providing the town and its visitors with so many services.



two eight two eight would particularly like to thank **Les Schirato**, owner of **Vittoria Coffee**, who has been such a generous benefactor over the last 15 years. On the morning after the dinner, a presentation of a gift to Les and all the staff at Vittoria Coffee was made to Peter Engesser who was representing Les at the dinner. Thanks Les for your friendship and support - we couldn't have done this without you!



*Thanks to Deidre Walker, Annette Fisher and Happy Booth for the photos!*