

The Turning wave

**Festival of Irish and Australian Music & the Related Arts
Celebrating Irish Australia and a World Celtic Fringe**

All the tracks are winding back



*An Introduction to Gundagai
and
The Turning Wave Festival*

☆ The Turning Wave ☆

Festival of Irish & Australian Music and the Related Arts

The Turning Wave Festival is an outstanding celebration of Irish & Australian music and the related arts held over five days of stunning events and performances, catering for music & arts enthusiasts, families who wish to enjoy a safe festival, and those who just come to soak up the atmosphere and the friendliness. The Festival is organised and presented by the Turning Wave Festival Committee under the auspices of the Gundagai Regional Enhancement Group Inc and is realised with the assistance and hospitality of the residents, businesses and Shire of Gundagai and, a brilliant team of volunteers.

Unique Anthology lends name to Festival

The Festival name, "The Turning Wave" is taken from a poem by Australian poet and writer Colleen Z Burke (Clare ancestry) and, an anthology of the same name compiled and edited by Colleen and Galway playwright & poet Vincent Woods, and is a collection of the poetry and song of Irish Australia, reflecting the strong Irish influence on the Australian ethos.

Idyllic Setting

Situated on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River just 375 km south west of Sydney, 495 km north east of Melbourne and 164km from the National Capital, Canberra iconic Gundagai, with its wide main street and character buildings, and its unique culture and history provides the perfect stage for the Turning Wave Festival.

Irish Connections

The Irish have been part of the fabric of Gundagai from the days of early settlement. From Irish famine orphan girls, to the Sisters of Mercy from Dublin to the infamous Irish bushranger, Captain Moonlight Irish connections abound. Many Irish names of the region's founding families are still evident today, and there was a time in the mid 1800's when there were many pockets stretching from Galong to Yass and Gundagai that were uniquely Irish speaking.

Diverse Program

The Turning Wave Festival showcases some of Australia's most celebrated musicians, bands singer/songwriters, poets, storytellers, raconteurs and dance troupes, in an exciting and diverse program that includes concerts, dance, workshops, spoken word, theatre, street theatre, exhibitions and events appropriate to the festival ethos and its current theme. While the Festival begins on Wednesday with master classes and special events, the main program starts at 5pm Friday and runs through till 5pm Sunday. A special feature of each festival is the inclusion of programmed events celebrating Irish culture through language, music, dance and stories.

Festival of Innovation

Each year the festival undertakes to add new and innovative events to complement and extend the existing program, and to seek new ways to explore traditional and contemporary Irish & Australian music and the arts.

Festival of Participation

In addition to an extensive concert program the festival encourages festival-goers to join in. With community ensembles, individual blackboard events, a Festival Folk Club, a Singers' Club, and numerous sessions around the town there's plenty of opportunity to get involved or find a stage to share your music.

☆ Historic Gundagai ☆

Gazetted in 1923 the Gundagai Shire is a local government area in the Riverina agricultural region. It is predominately a rural community with a small population, 80% of which live in the historic town of Gundagai, nestled in the South West Slopes of NSW on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River. Comprising part of the lands of the Wiradjuri people, Gundagai is approximately half way between Sydney and Melbourne just off Australia's busiest highway, the Hume, a comfortable 164km drive from Australia's national capital, and easily accessible from regional centres. There are also four villages in the Shire: Coolac, Tumblong, Muttama and Nangus, with populations ranging from 40 to 90 people.

Traditionally a very safe farming area, the rural economy remains the backbone of the community with the Shire yielding a wide variety of produce. Bee farmers produce prodigious amounts of beautiful honey while wool, lamb and beef are also important. The area produces excellent lucerne, hay, horticultural products and cereal crops. In recent years, viticulture has become an increasingly important crop in the district with several large vineyards now operational and more planned.

Gundagai is a caring community and offers a variety of unique, cultural experiences and a scenic countryside with a wealth of bush characters providing much of the inspiration for the stories and poems of Australia's most famous poet "Banjo" Paterson who spent considerable time at "Kiley's Run". The town is proud of its rich heritage and is one of the very few places in Australia that has been immortalised in the Australian psyche by the many songs and poems written about it such as "*Along the Road to Gundagai*".



Gundagai's unique experiences

Heritage

Gundagai Shire boasts over one hundred heritage sites (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and has developed a Heritage Plan which is integral to the region's Heritage Management and tourism experience.

Experiences include walking tours of Heritage buildings, the Old Gundagai Town site and self guided tours of the heritage sections of the cemeteries.

The Turning Wave Festival events are set in heritage buildings and the heritage tours are incorporated into the festival Program. Indigenous heritage and the connection of the original owners to the land is recognised throughout the Festival Program.

There is also a tour which incorporates some of the Aboriginal heritage sites that will be included in the proposed Aboriginal Heritage Trail being developed by the local Aboriginal Community Working Party.

Arts and Culture

The Gundagai Regional Enhancement Group coordinates and initiates a variety of arts and cultural projects, the most ambitious of which is The Turning Wave Festival, an annual major showcase event which acts as a vehicle for the celebration and expression of the region's cultural identity through music, spoken word and literature.

Gundagai is also the home of the other annual festivals and events, art galleries, a craft emporium, photographic gallery, and murals situated throughout the town.

Food and Wine

Gundagai region is the gateway to the Riverina and offers attractions for food and wine lovers and has quality restaurants. This experience includes wine tasting complemented by fine food produced with local, fresh produce. Enjoying and learning about complementary food and wine and dining in picturesque rural and heritage settings. Food and Wine events are scheduled into the Turning Wave Festival program.

Natural Environment

Walking paths and bike trails connect a variety of nature-based experiences, including a unique forest of endangered species, flora and bush-tucker education, picnicking and walking among wildflowers. Many of the nature-based experiences are closely connected to the local Indigenous heritage. Guided nature walks within the CBD and Morley's Creek area are conducted during the Turning Wave Festival.

People and Lifestyle

Gundagai is a friendly town with excellent education, health and aged care facilities. With top class sporting amenities, a relaxed lifestyle and proximity to major centres it is a great place to live and work or to visit.





The Gundagai Regional Enhancement Group Inc (GREG) founded in 2003 is a not for profit, volunteer, incorporated body which evolved from the former Gundagai Advancement Corporation as a result of extensive community consultation and the development of the Gundagai Community Plan. GREG acts as an “umbrella” organisation for the community and businesses within the Gundagai Shire and plays an important role in coordinating the collaborative efforts of different groups contributing to community projects. GREG coordinates and initiates a variety of community projects with the primary focus of implementing a Strategic Plan aimed at enhancing the social, cultural, environmental and economic capital of the Gundagai region.

The most ambitious cultural initiative undertaken by GREG is The Turning Wave Festival, an annual major showcase event which acts as a vehicle for the celebration and expression of the region’s cultural identity through music, spoken word and literature. The Festival is celebrated annually commencing the Wednesday leading into the third weekend of September. The Turning Wave is a festival of Irish and Australian music and the related arts, showcasing over 60 top-class acts from around Australia with special guest musicians from Ireland.

Recent Projects Initiated by GREG:

Rail Trail: Supports the Gundagai Bicycle User Group's proposal to Council for a bike and walking trail along the disused railway line from Coolac to Tumblong. The proposal can be viewed on the Gundagai Shire Council website www.gundagai.nsw.gov.au.

Morley's Creek: GREG received funding from the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority to regenerate Morley's Creek. The upper sections of Morley's Creek will be re-connected to the Murrumbidgee to enhance native fish spawning and provide access to quality habitat.

Old Gaol: Formation of a committee and plan to develop the Old Gundagai Gaol as a significant sight and tourist attraction.

Bushcare Yarri Park Project: To restore the vegetation on the banks of Morley's Creek at Yarri Park. The replanting has created habitat for more and more wildlife species and there has been increase in the number of frog, reptile and bird species using the area.

Gundagai Region - Authentic Australia