

MEDIA RELEASE – 7 DECEMBER, 2011

Forget Wall St.

OCCUPY THE BUSH!

**Join the real conservationists of the High Country
at the MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN'S FESTIVAL**

The 2012 Mountain Cattlemen's Festival and Get Together is returning to Merrijig on 13/14/15th January. "We intend to make it unforgettable, the best yet," said local branch president, Bruce McCormack.

"The Mountain Cattlemen have been kicked from pillar to post this year, by green groups, the Melbourne "Age" and Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke. It's been a series of free hits, all one-way traffic. Well, now it's our turn to have our say," he said. "We want to show that there's a bit more to us than 'just a few selfish farmers looking for a free feed for their cattle', as Tony Burke recently put it."

The weekend will see an expanded range of events, competitions and displays that illustrate the culture and heritage of the Mountain Cattlemen. "Cattlemen have been living and working in the Victorian high country for 180 years" said local bush identity, Charlie Lovick. "The knowledge that's been gained and passed on, the stories, the songs, the art, the poetry, the humour... all of this is not just our treasure, it lies at the heart of the Australian story. It's been embraced by Australians, old and new, down through the ages. We shared the high country with all other users; we want to continue to share our heritage."

Bruce McCormack said, "There will be non-stop entertainment all weekend, with everything you'd expect at a Cattlemen's Get Together and a few surprises. People of all ages will be able to get involved in events and be part of the action."

Hallmark events like the Mountain Cattlemen's Cup will continue. This race, the first bush horse race of the modern era, is now in its 30th year. It is still the one to win. Also on are the Run-amuck Cup, relay and rescue races, packhorse events, a buck-out and the dog jump.

This year the Get Together is being held at the Merrijig rodeo ground in the shadow of Mt Timbertop. This facility has a proper arena with superb viewing. There is plenty of camping on site and several nearby businesses offer accommodation. There will be a full service bar right beside the action, plenty of shaded areas, a range of catering, bush markets, craft stalls, merchandise. Bands will play into the night, Friday through Sunday. If it is hot, the Delatite River is very close by.

Bruce McCormack extended an invitation to join the Mountain Cattlemen at their Festival to "anyone concerned about the health and welfare of the bush (which is what we used to call the environment up here before things took a turn for the worse), anyone interested in the history, culture and heritage of the High Country and anyone just out for a good time. Cattlemen just want to have fun, too," he said.

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