

Cattlemen celebrate getting together

IT'S been three years since the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria (MCAV) have held their annual Get Together, and what a return the event has made.

More than 3000 people gathered at Merrijig over the weekend, the muddy ground apparently no deterrent.

Part of the celebration was a focus on the 40th anniversary of the Man From Snowy River movie, with Tom Burlinson – aka the Man himself - spending the weekend hanging out with fans, signing autographs and taking a trip down memory lane.

Tom was joined by number of the original crack riders who also participated in the film, including local stunt man Gerald Egan, movie producer Geoff Burrowes and Master Horsemen Charlie Lovick.

In officially opening the event, president of the MCAV, Bruce McCormack – also a Merrijig local who starred in the Snowy River movies – called on those present to support practical management of the High Country at the coming State Election.

“Support better High Country land management by voting for those candidates who will do something to improve the situation we now find ourselves in,” he said.

“Over the years the Governments has announced ever increasing areas of National Parks, but there was no on-going funding to manage those parks.

“The Governments gave in to the Greens and reduced burning programs and now we find ourself with a High Country choked with feral weeds, feral deer and native scrub that needs burning.

“This situation and build up – and what a build up there will be after this winter and spring – means that when the next bushfire comes, and come it will, it will burn hotter, brighter and out of control.”

Bruce asked those gathered to think about the situation being faced by the High Country, describing a landscape choked with blackberries where once there was open parkland.

“What am I am describing is a total failure of public land management – management is obviously failing when the land we love is suffering.

Bruce was joined for the official opening by Leader of the National Party Peter Walsh, along with National Member for Eastern Victoria Melina Bath, Liberal Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish and National Member for Gippsland East Tim Bull.

On the arena there was a host of new events for the horse riders as the Cattlemen made a focus for 2022 on encouraging younger riders.

There were junior packhorse races, gymkhana novelties, obstacle courses, walking races, cattle work and much more.

The overall winner of the Driza-Bone Junior Challenge was Billy Phegan, with recently married couple Chloe Trompf and Dave Mitchell taking out the Ladies and the Open.

“It was a great weekend for the whole family,” Mr McCormack said.

“The weather conditions were against us in the lead-up with mud axle-deep and rain forecast, but in the end the sun came out and it was a fantastic weekend.”

“We are already looking forward to making our 2023 Get Together bigger and better.”

The next MCAV Get Together will be held in Gippsland.

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