

Monday 11 March 2019

Attention: Mr G Faulkner,  
Lithgow City Council  
Mort Street, Lithgow 2790



### **Request for Council Support for Ironfest 2019**

As per discussions with management and staff, Ironfest Inc. is seeking council support and sponsorship for the 2019 event.

In the past Council support has been provided through recurring grants, which Ironfest did not apply for in the previous round, as we had discussed more suitable alternatives.

There are three main components to the support we are requesting of Council for the 2019 - 20th Anniversary event.

- 1) Supply of all grounds requested for an extended period due the schedule of public holidays for this year, our festival bump in will require more time.
- 2) Installation of new power infrastructure - TBA
- 3) Provision of essential services to the festival including cleaning, garbage and traffic management. It is our feeling that the council is in a far better position to negotiate favourable rates from providers than Ironfest.

There are also a number of requests to create a more usable space at the showground, not just for Ironfest but for any event or ongoing user. There is a list of items we have discussed between our group and other users (Lithgow Show etc) which will be submitted to council in due course. We would like to focus on our current needs for this years festival at this time.

#### **Essential:**

- Bump-in & exclusive use all areas from April 19
- Bump-out all areas April 30
- Areas requested: Showground precinct, Watsford & Conran Ovals for parking; Glanmire Oval & Facilities (can we inspect these soon?); trotters room; access to land on the southern side of Barton St (opp BB stadium) for participant parking; access to land behind Ferreros
- The smell at the front gate (Gate 1)
- Non-Flooding toilets (to be pumped out prior to the event)
- The non-functioning toilet block behind grand stand made functional
- Gate 4 access (Perse's gate)

#### **Extra Requests**

- External Traffic management
- Bins provision & Waste collection (details to be advised)
- Improved cleaning services
- Secure fencing (at least holes repaired)
- Additional (2X) 3phase power outlets (north side near cage)
- Waterpoints (X4) on fields
- Kerb & guttering repairs (currently trip hazards), Drain covers (cnrs numerous buildings)
- New pedestrian gate (east side) to connect showground & BB stadium parking area
- Ironfest signage beneath billboards on H'way
- Manpower (2 Council men X 2 days plus ute) plus Back-hoe 2 days
- Relocate bin adjacent to grandstand
- Relocate any/all equipment from Council shed that might be req'd over the weekend
- Repair internal fence adjacent to grand stand

I look forward to finding a mutually beneficial outcome to this request.

Kind Regards

Rich Evans

President, Ironfest Inc.



# IRONFEST 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN





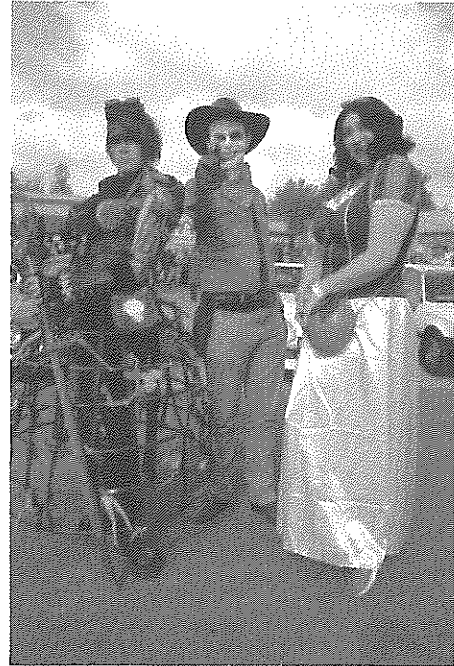
# Executive Summary

## Vision

We strive to make Ironfest an internationally recognised cultural festival that brings a broad range of arts and performances together in a synergy that is unique to the event.

## Mission

We are a not for profit community based incorporated body that seeks to provide a venue for a diverse group of performers and artists in an annual event held in Lithgow NSW. To encourage visitors from all over Australia who participate by dressing in costume and in doing so add to the event. To draw tourists to Ironfest and to Lithgow as a destination.



## 2019 Festival goals

This is our 20th Anniversary and to celebrate we will expand the festival in the following ways Extend festival into twilight/night:

- We will extend the festival entertainment on Saturday until 7pm
- Make a documentary about the festival
- Will be released in the weeks prior to the event
- Expand kids activities at festival
- Create a special kids area
- Create an attendee camping option
- Make camping available to attendees at Glanmire Oval
- Expand festival into Lithgow LGA
- Work with council and local business to establish an Ironfest Presence on Main st
- Ironfest month - teaser events leading up to event
- Develop a new traffic plan incorporating the Lithgow Visitors centre as an entry point.
- Further development of the app and website



# Event Profile

Conceived as a flagship cultural event designed to highlight the industrial & cultural history of the Lithgow valley by focussing on metal art & artisans, the first Ironfest was held over Easter from April 24 – April 28 in 2000 was a glorified art exhibition with entertainment held in a number of shops in the East End Main St Lithgow.

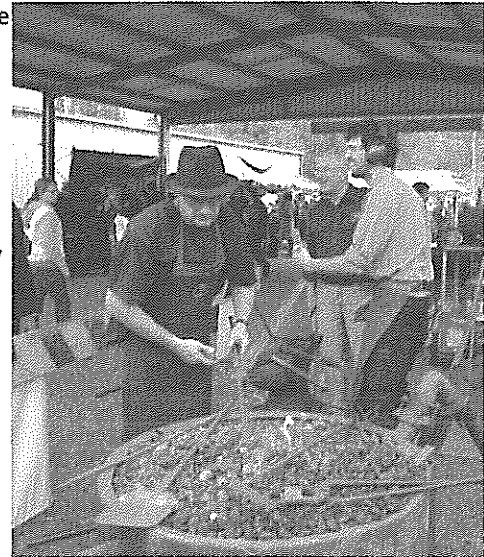
Celebrating the 100 year anniversary of the birth of steel in Australia in Lithgow it involved: 4 blacksmiths & approximately 30 artists working in metal & other mediums; a number of performers & musicians & attracted a great deal of media attention (because of the historic significance of the occasion) & over 400 people visited.

The following year it was expanded to include a number of venues outside of Main St including the Small Arms Factory Museum, the State Mine Museum, Talisman Gallery, and the Blast Furnace Park; involving around 70 participants and attracting 700 visitors.

In 2002/03 it moved to the State Mine Museum and in this fabulous setting became a real festival involving around 300 people (artists, performers and re-enactors) and attracting in excess of 3,000 visitors.

In 2004 it was forced (because of parking and traffic concerns) to move to its current home the Lithgow Showground where it has grown exponentially; this year involving approximately 2,000 participants and attracting in excess of 18,000 visitors.

True to its beginnings Ironfest today still comprises of artisans making & selling their handmade products although the range & origins of these products have expanded dramatically. Products being sold now include organic produce; antiques, memorabilia, animal skins, architectural fittings, fashion, as well as a much broader range of arts & crafts; and the artisans are now coming from all around Australia.



One important aspect of Ironfest today that wasn't evident in the beginning is historical re-enactment. In 2003 a small band of approx. 30 medieval re-enactors attended & demonstrated foot combat. Since that time the re-enactment element has grown incredibly to the point that there were 5 major multi-era re-enactment events take place in 2018 involving approx. 1500 people. Historical re-enactment thus plays a big role in our contemporary event & is a big crowd drawcard.

Lithgow's post-industrial image; building on a recent town beautification program & transforming Lithgow's image in the eyes of the general public from one of a dirty old coal mining town to an aesthetically beautiful place where quality events take place.

Many participants from outside the region involved in Ironfest now take part in Council run, & other, events around the district eg Halloween and the Hartley Historic Village Fair & locals are proud to promote their town as a location worth visiting.

Ironfest has had an immeasurable effect on



# Destination Profile

Lithgow is 140km west of the Sydney CBD, and the 'Gateway to the Central West'. It is located at the intersections of the Great-Western Highway, Castlereagh highway, and Bells Line (B59 Lithgow-Richmond). It is a dormitory suburb of Sydney and is connected to the Sydney electric rail system, with 15 train services per day. Lithgow is 150 km from Mascot Airport in Sydney and will be 100km from the Western Sydney Airport which is expected to open in 2026. Lithgow's proximity to Sydney and the Central West make it a suitable location for day trips for residents of the entire Sydney basin.



The region has many artistic and cultural groups and hubs including, but not limited to, Lithgow Union Theatre, Lithgow City Band, Lithgow Hartley Artists in Action, Greater Lithgow Arts Council, Lithgow Living History re-enactment group, Mitchell Conservatorium, Men's Shed, SALT Women's Shed, Small Arms Factory Museum, and the Foundations Portland are in the process of re-developing the Portland Cement works into a cultural hub.

Ironfest has a 20 year history in Lithgow which has showcased a vast majority of the artistic and cultural groups to an ever increasing audience. It is now a festival of significance for the region and draws substantial tourism spend to the area.

The festival has also featured many artists and performers from all over Australia, with many of participants travelling to Ironfest annually to meet up with their groups, sometimes staying beyond the Ironfest weekend.

Lithgow has a rich heritage in steel and manufacturing which was the original catalyst for the festival. The diversity now enjoyed by Ironfest has largely been due to the organic growth of different groups being involved in Lithgow's biggets festival.



# Event management structure

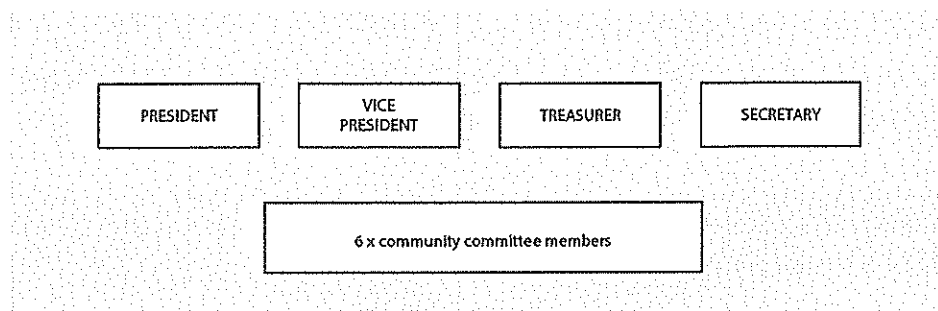
Ironfest is currently structured as a not for profit incorporated association known as Ironfest Incorporated.

There is a yearly rolling contract in place with festival founder Macgregor Ross for the licensing of intellectual property and the direction of each yearly festival.

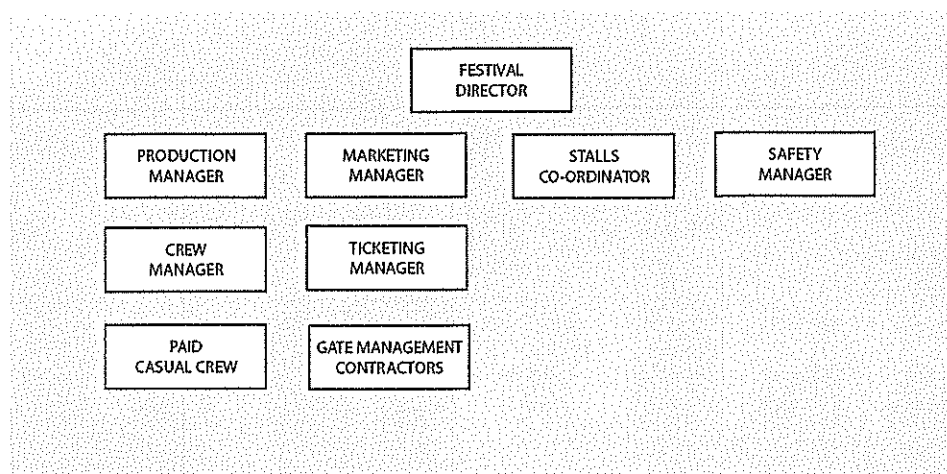
There is also a festival production team, which is made up by a number of paid contractors and volunteers on the weekend. Ironfest prides itself on being able to create casual employment for the duration of the festival for a number of our core team rather than continually relying on volunteers.

The Ironfest Inc committee is responsible for the management of the organisation, approval of budgets and overall compliance of the event, whilst the production management team is responsible for the creative, development and execution of each event.

This structure works well for our organisation and ensures that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.



## IRONFEST





# Recent Event Statistics

Over the past three years, Ironfest has had a strategic approach growing the festival and has seen this rewarded with a significant increase in both participant numbers and visitor numbers.

## The Numbers 2019

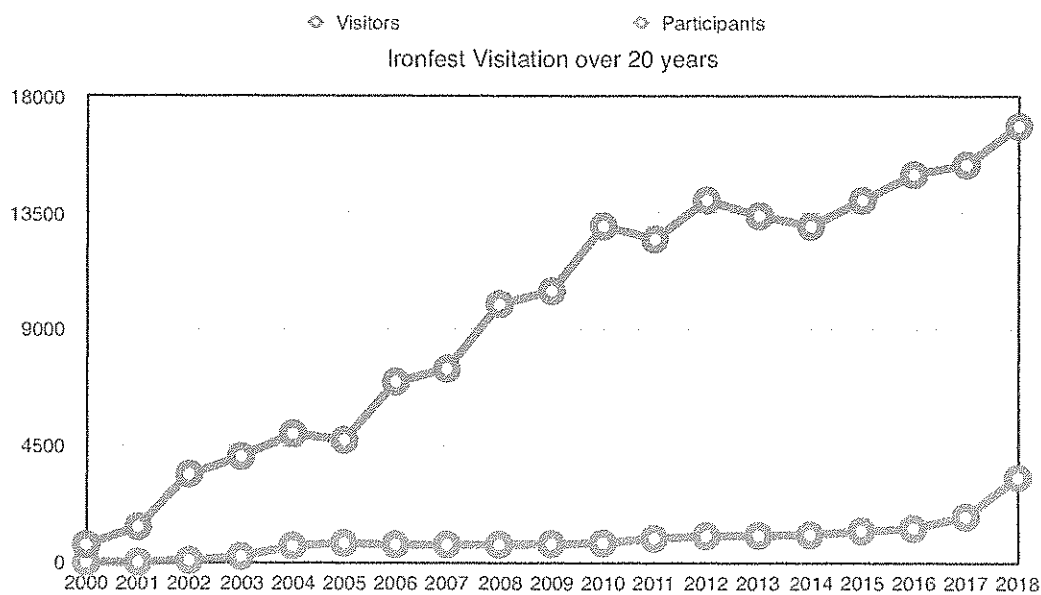
We sold 2964 tickets online prior to the event, compared to 2715 tickets online the previous year.

We sold a total of 8272 tickets, an increase of 720 tickets on 2017

Of the 8272 tickets there were 1633 were family passes which were entry for 2 x adults and 3 children. We also had redemption of free passes handed out as prizes and currency

This gives us a front gate entry tally of 16863 people, an increase just shy of 10% on the 15354 people of 2017

In addition we registered 2960 participants at the back gate as 2 day participants, and 180 market stalls going an additional (estimated) 360 people per day, leading to the data backed number of 20543 people on site over the weekend of Ironfest.



Prior to 2017 numbers were calculated by gate takings and using a ticket price number for division rather than actual counts. We now use a fully electronic ticketing system that accurately reflects the number of tickets sold and what types of tickets. The only small area we now use an estimate is in the calculation on family tickets as we allow up to 3 children in on a family ticket and do not charge for children under 5.

# The Future of Ironfest 2019 and beyond

Over the past 20 years it is the our experience that we have connected with all the diverse characters that are naturally attracted to an event like Ironfest, not just from Lithgow but from all over Australia.

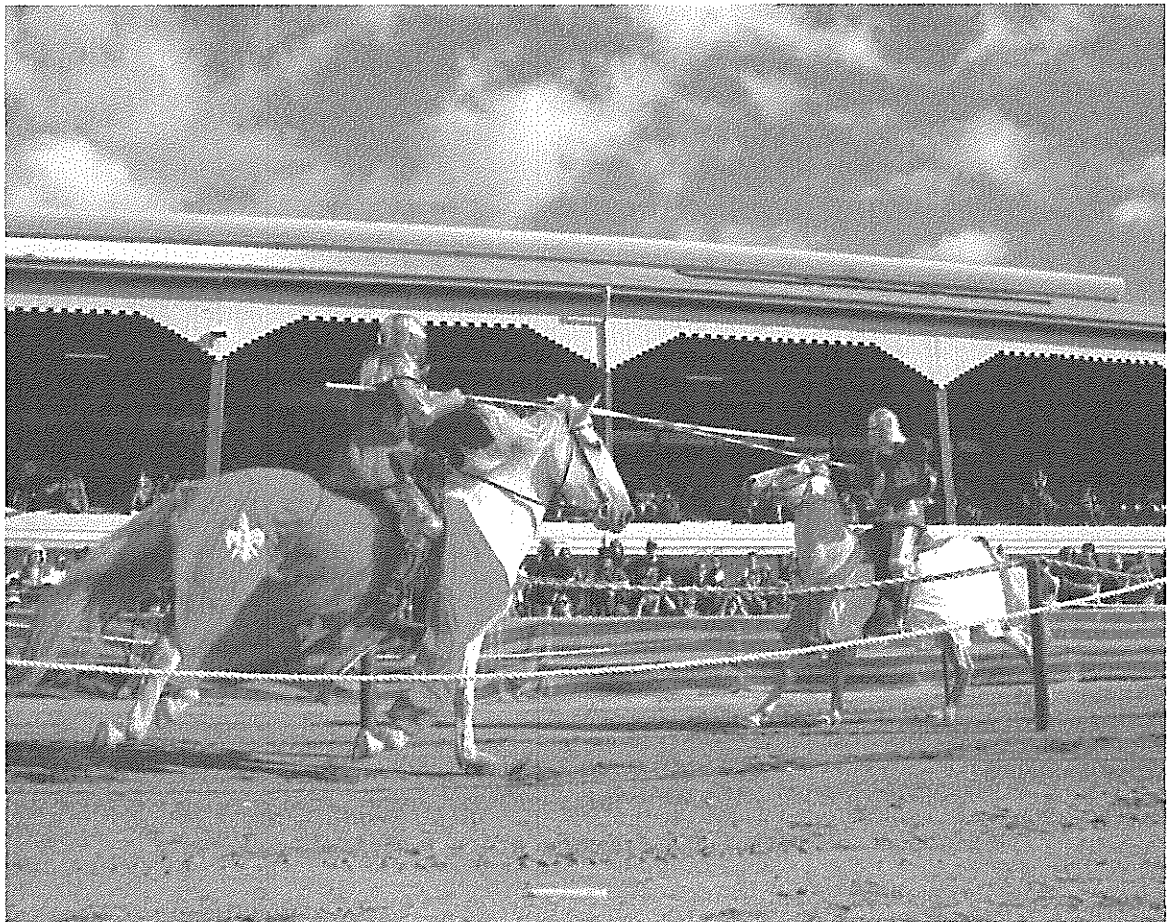
These passionate supporters of their own subcultures already know about Ironfest and they have it locked in their calendar every year.

Our opportunity now is in the fast growing Western Sydney basin attracting visitors over the mountain for the weekend. These people are not aware of Ironfest, nor are they aware of the Lithgow region as a potential weekend getaway destination.

An event like Ironfest is family friendly and affordable for budget conscious families looking for an exciting weekend adventure not too far from home.

With a growing focus on regional tourism as a major economic driver, Ironfest is perfectly placed to be the drawcard that sees this happen for the Lithgow region.

With Ironfest celebrating it's 20th anniversary in 2019 we see it as a fantastic opportunity to develop the festival further and make it sustainable into the future.



# Expanding our festival

## Night time fire show

incorporates live performance involving acrobatic and dance using fire instruments to create a visually stunning night time show that is uniquely Ironfest.

This will be enhanced with digital projection and lighting on to the show ground ballroom facade.

We will also support this with a range of vaudeville style burlesque performers. This show will keep our audience on site for an additional 3 hours during the evening.

**Required funding \$10,000**

## Ball setup

20th anniversary once upon a time ball will be on site for the first time ever. This event has traditionally been a satellite event associated with Ironfest, but this year we intend to bring it home

In order to make this a memorable event but keep it cost effective for our participants, we are seeking funding for professional decoration and catering for the event in this first year.

**Required funding \$5,000**

## World Music & Dance tent

We are developing an all new venue to celebrate the diverse cultures of Ironfest with a world music and dance pop up venue. This will be an outdoor venue housed in a temporary marquee and showcase musicians and performers introducing the Ironfest audience to an exciting new performers from around the region.

**Required funding \$4,500**

## Medieval feast

We envisage this to be a thank you dinner to all our core audience members including medieval re-enactors and blacksmiths. This would not be open to the public and be a participant only event.

**Required funding \$3,000**

## Fireworks

As an extension to the night program, we are proposing approaching Howard and Sons on a sponsorship basis to match dollar for dollar a celebration fireworks show on Saturday night. This event would be visible to the entire region and not just Ironfest audience.

**Required funding \$10,000**

## Kids Kingdom

We have identified that a growing age bracket at our festival is children under the age of 12. We feel we need to expand the children's activities into a dedicated area including a range of age appropriate attractions and events to ensure that this audience get value for money.

**Required funding \$7,000**

# Expanding our marketing

## Documentary

We have commissioned award winning documentary maker, Russell Kilbey (Man from Coxes River) to create a documentary of the people behind Ironfest and tell the story of our participants and visitors, as opposed to a historical summary of the event.

This project was started in 2018 and has delivered a range of fantastic video assets we are now using in our marketing. Our initial trailer release enjoyed over 10,000 views across our networks in 1 week when launched in early December.

To finish this project and to be able to have a product to sell we are looking at various sources of funding for the final costs including a crowd funding campaign as well as grants that may be appropriate to this kind of project.

**Required funding \$15,000**

## Western Sydney marketing

In order to reach our currently untapped audience of families in Western Sydney, we have developed a marketing plan to talk to this audience through a range of media including print, radio and popup marketing events at high traffic commuter locations.

We feel that the visual feast of Ironfest turning up at morning commuter hotspots would have a massive impact, far greater than any number of expensive media campaigns, and if we then follow that through with well placed cost effective advertising, we believe we can increase our brand awareness exponentially in this market.

**Required funding \$10,000**

## App development

Over the past three years we have been decreasing the number of paper printed programs we have available at the gate to the point where in 2018 we had no paper programs available and directed our visitors to download our app.

This adoption saw over 3500 app downloads last year and means that we now have our app installed on the phones of 3500 visitors and potential returning visitors to Ironfest.

We intend to increase the capabilities of our app in 2019 to include far more time relevant information to our audience and start using it as a means of drilling down on the things our visitors are engaged in. There is an opportunity for gamification that we are also investigating, with a virtual treasure hunt taking place during the event, designed to keep people at the event for as long as possible in order to complete the hunt and redeem their prize.

**Required funding \$12,500**



## Website

The ironfest website has long been an underutilised resource for ongoing communication with our audience. We have historically mainly used the website for ticket sales and focussed on buiding our community on the face book page (Kingdom of Ironfest)

We see an opportunity to have a number of areas to icrease visitation to our website and the opportunity to create revenue streams year round for our organisation. Examples of these would be merchandise, ticket offers and joint venture with other associations offering our marketing services to other events.

## Required funding \$5,000

## Key Growth Initiatives funding requirements

### Expanding our festival

•	Night time fire show	\$10,000
•	Ball setup	\$5,000
•	Dance tent	\$5,000
•	Medieval feast	\$5,000
•	Fireworks	\$10,000
•	Kiddies Kingdom	\$7,500

### Expanding our marketing

•	Documentary	\$15,000
•	Western Sydney marketing	\$10,000
•	App development	\$12,000
•	Website	\$5,000

Total Funding Requirement	\$84,500
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# Conclusion

Ironfest is a branded festival that has enormous potential to continue to grow and develop new audiences and bring them to Lithgow. We feel that the 20th anniversary is just the right time to be developing these future platforms, so the festival can do more than survive - it can thrive for another 20 years.

We are seeking funding from a range of grants, private funding through sponsorship and all levels of government. We appreciate that this is a large commitment to our festival for any one organisation to consider.

As a incorporated not for profit organisation we have traditionally developed our festival budget based on the previous years ticket sales and held a small amount of reserve funds, but to invest this heavily in the development of the festival program and our marketing, we require the assistance of organisations that can see the tangible benefits and long track record of the Ironfest brand.

Ironfest looks forward to finding a funding or sponsorship pathway with your organisation, and making the 2019 Ironfest Once Upon a Time and event to remember and the dawn of the next age of our festival.



**Ironfest Inc: PO Box 461 Lithgow NSW 2790**

Founding Festival Director: Macgregor Ross M: 0459 687 837

Production: Boris Hunt M: 0447 067 407

President and Marketing Manager: Rich Evans M: 0488 188 786





