



Celebrating the 50th Top Half Folk Festival

11th – 14th June 2021
Mary River Wilderness Retreat

Newsletter No 1 - February 2021

In 2020 the 50th celebrations were cancelled due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. As we steadily work toward overcoming the virus across Australia the 50th Top Half Folk Festival is now planned to take place in June 2021.

The 2021 Program...

As intended in 2020, the 2021 program will be an exciting combination of concerts, presentations and 'hands on' workshops.

Over the past 50 years the Top Half Folk Festival has been hosted throughout the Northern Territory and Queensland and this year will showcase the stories and the people who have made the Festival a success. Come along and immerse yourself in the music and stories. Learn, listen and get involved.

The 50th Top Half Folk Festival will celebrate the song writers and story tellers who have told the stories of the Top End over the years, drawing us into a showcase of life in the Top End. We'll welcome back some 'blasts from the past' and there will be plenty of opportunity to gather new songs and learn old ones.

The focus on songwriters and story tellers will include a '**not to be missed**' event with two old timers, **Ted Egan** and **Bill Yidumduma Harney**, who are going to tell us a story or two. Bill and Ted spent much of their youth in each other's company and will relish in the opportunity to reminisce as much as the audience will enjoy hearing the stories.

From 3pm on Friday 11 June we will be set up and ready to sell tickets at Mary River Wilderness Resort. Weekend tickets will also be presold – we'll let you know when. An early evening *Welcome Concert* will get the Festival under way on Friday.

Each morning will start with the Poets' Breakfast and Saturday and Sunday will offer a full program of concerts, workshops and presentations, including the ever-popular Folk Quiz and 'renowned' themed presentation by Paul Stewart.

For anyone who makes their own brew - start your beer and wine brewing now as you will need to bring some along to contribute to one of the presentations.

As always, the informal music and singing sessions will be happening around the camp fire and on the verandah into the wee hours.

The formal program will finish at lunch time Monday 14 June with a morning farewell concert.

More information will be in the next newsletter or keep up to date through www.topendfolkclub.org or www.facebook.com/tophalffolkfestival/

CD Sales...

If you are performing or presenting and have merchandise for sale, bring it with you.

Venue, Reservations and Accommodation...

As with previous Festivals in the Top End, the venue is again the idyllic Mary River Wilderness Retreat, 110km east of Darwin on the Arnhem Highway.

Further details about the venue can be found at www.maryriverretreat.com.au

Do not use online booking - Bookings must be made by email to info@maryriverretreat.com.au or phone direct 08 8978 8877. There is no booking number – just state that you are attending the Folk Festival.

Bungalows and powered campsites are fully booked but unpowered campsites at Mary River are still available.

ALL accommodation must be booked in advance – including camping sites.

Alternative cabin accommodation is expected to be available soon at the newly renovated **Bark Hut Inn**. The Bark Hut is only 2 km further along the Arnhem Highway from the main Festival venue. We'll keep you informed on this option as information becomes available.

Food and Drink...

Mary River Wilderness Park will cater breakfasts, lunches and dinners. There is a camp kitchen for anyone wishing to self-cater. There will be vegetarian, gluten and lactose-free options, but these and any other dietary requirements need to be advised in advance.

The Bar will be open from midday until 2.00am. NB: BYO is not permitted in the restaurant, bar, decks and pool areas.

Transport...

The Top End Folk Club will arrange transport to and from the Festival venue for **Weekend Ticket holders**. i.e. out Friday, back Monday ONLY. Costs and how to book to be advised.

Tickets...

Weekend tickets will be on sale shortly, with an early bird option. Day and concert tickets will also be available. Watch for the next newsletter or updates on our website or Facebook.

Other Activities...

Mary River Wilderness Retreat are looking at conducting river cruises (subject to numbers). Further details as they come to hand.

We look forward to seeing you there.