

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until 10:00am AEST, Tuesday 22 September 2026

CULTURE, CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY CONVERGE ON THE OUTBACK TRAIL 2027

Endless red dirt roads, culturally rich communities and music worth travelling for: **QLD Music Trails: The Outback Trail** returns for its fifth consecutive year from **8–22 May 2027**.

A self-drive, choose-your-own-adventure musical road trip spanning seven outback towns, QLD Music Trails' promises connection, the thrill of live performance and unforgettable locations.

From Charleville to Mount Isa, the 2027 route takes travellers through the heart of Outback Queensland, inviting them to swap city skylines for big skies, endless highways, colourful communities and live Australian music.

Off the back of 2026—when the Trail achieved a 95 per cent increase in attendance compared with the previous year—the 2027 Trail will build on its biggest year yet, bringing even more music, artists, communities and travellers together across the Queensland Outback.

QMF CEO Daryl Raven said the Outback Trail was about so much more than putting on live music.

"The Outback 2026 was our biggest Trail yet, with more than 7,000 locals and travellers joining us across eight communities and 1,400 kilometres of regional Queensland. The scale of that engagement shows the incredible appetite for shared cultural tourism experiences in Outback Queensland, and the role music events can play in connecting communities, industry and visitors," Mr Raven said.

"In 2027, we're excited to take the Outback Trail experience even further, creating more opportunities for locals, travellers and artists to come together and experience the unique stories, places and communities along the way.

"We're expecting hundreds of Trail travellers to pack up their cars, caravans and RVs and travel the full 16-day itinerary with us from town to town, along with thousands of locals and weekend travellers to join along the way - embracing the journey, discovering new places and sharing the experience with the communities that make the Outback Trail so special."

The Outback Trail 2027 program promises a variety of events, with each stop offering a unique experience, with new artists, shaped by the character of its host community.

Among the highlights, **Charleville's Saddle Up** kicks things off with a high-energy hoedown celebrating the traditions and spirit of country gatherings.

In a celebration of Australian country music legend Slim Dusty's legacy in what would have been his 100th birthday year, Longreach will host **Dusty Days**, a live music experience under the wings of aviation history in the hangar at QANTAS Founders Museum, headlined by another music legend **Troy Cassar-Daley**.



The Outback Trail will once again culminate in Mount Isa with **Outback Sounds**, QMF's signature event and ultimate Trail grand finale headlined by some of Australia's biggest acts alongside emerging local talent.

The 2026 Outback Trail delivered a significant boost to regional Queensland, attracting more than 7,650 attendees across 16 days, including 2,339 visitors from outside the region, who generated 21,684 bed nights and contributed \$2.9 million in visitor expenditure across Queensland.

The Trail also created meaningful employment opportunities, with QMF supporting the employment of 82 Queenslanders across the program, including 41 Queensland First Nations artists and arts workers, reinforcing the Trail's role in supporting local talent and strengthening regional communities through culture and tourism.

Queensland Minister for Education and the Arts John-Paul Langbroek welcomed the return of the trail next May.

"Connecting regional communities and visitors through a shared love of music, QMF's *QLD Music Trails: The Outback* is a standout event on Queensland's cultural calendar," Minister Langbroek said.

"After record attendance in 2026, next year's Outback Trail promises to be even bigger - with highlights including a boot-scooting bush dance in Blackall, a celebration of music legend Slim Dusty in Longreach and the return of Outback Sounds in Mount Isa.

"The Crisafulli Government is proud to support this internationally awarded event, which delivers on our 10-year arts and culture strategy, *Queensland's Time to Shine*, by championing Queensland artists, strengthening communities' access to enriching arts experiences and enhancing our state's reputation as a vibrant cultural destination."

Minister for the Environment and Tourism Andrew Powell said the Outback Trail would give visitors another compelling reason to explore regional Queensland.

"The Outback Trail is turning a road trip into a tourism experience, giving visitors another reason to venture beyond the beaten track and discover Queensland's incredible outback," Minister Powell said.

"Every stop along the way brings more customers through local businesses, more visitors staying longer and more opportunities for regional communities to share in the benefits of tourism.

"Through Destination 2045, we're backing the experiences that make Queensland the home of the holiday and give travellers more reasons to explore our state from coast to outback."

CEO Daryl Raven encouraged travellers and locals alike to experience QLD Music Trails.

"The Trail's 2026 impact highlights QMF's ongoing commitment to bringing live music, unique events and cultural tourism to regional Queensland, creating opportunities for communities to connect, participate and share their stories with visitors from across the state and beyond," Mr Raven said.



"We're looking forward to welcoming locals and travellers back to the road for another unforgettable journey through the heart of regional Queensland in 2027."

Tickets go on sale **Tuesday 13 October**, giving road trippers the perfect excuse to start planning their route and get ready to chase the music from town to town.

The QLD Music Trails are presented by Queensland Music Festival (QMF) and funded by the Queensland Government, via Arts Queensland and Tourism and Events Queensland. QMF is supported by the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation and receives funding through Creative Australia and the Australian Cultural Fund.

The Outback Trail is supported by Outback Queensland Tourism Association, Murweh Regional Council, Blackall-Tambo Regional Council, Barcaldine Regional Council, Longreach Regional Council, McKinlay Shire Council and Mount Isa City Council.

For more information, visit qldmusictrails.com/trails/the-outback/.

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QLD MUSIC TRAILS – THE OUTBACK TRAIL 2027

Tickets on sale: Tuesday 13 October 2026

When: Saturday 8 May – Saturday 22 May 2027

Where: Various locations across Outback Queensland

More info: qldmusictrails.com/trails/the-outback/

TRAIL HIGHLIGHTS

Tori Darke – QLD Music Trails Outback Ambassador – Tori Darke returns to Outback Queensland with the Trails to perform and host travellers along the 1,400km journey from Charleville to Mount Isa.

Charleville – Saddle Up (8 May)

The Trail's opening celebration brings contemporary country rock, dance and local participation together under the stars at Charleville Racecourse. *Ticketed event.*

Blackall – Blackall Bush Dance (11 May)

An evening honouring the traditions of the Australian bush through music, dance and storytelling inside the historic Blackall Woolscour. *Ticketed event.*

Barcaldine – Outback Exchange (12 May)

A deep sense of community will draw travellers to Barcaldine to explore the theme of 'Legacy' through conversation, performance and participation. *Ticketed event.*

Longreach – Dusty Days (14 May)

A celebration of Australian music legend Slim Dusty's legacy in what would have been his 100th birthday year, featuring live performances from country artists including **Troy Cassar-Daley** amongst the aircrafts at QANTAS Founders Museum. *Ticketed event.*

Winton – Diamonds in the Dust (Monday 17 May)

We bring a little sparkle to the Trail in Winton, with **Diamonds in the Dust**, the Outback's first pop-up piano bar for one night only. Make a request, call out an old favourite or join in



for a sing-along as our piano player is joined throughout the night by a cast of local talent and special guest artists. *Ticketed event.*

Julia Creek – Dinner Under the Stars (19 May)

A relaxed long-table gathering bringing Trail Travellers and the local community together for music, food and conversation beneath the stars. *Ticketed event.*

Mount Isa – Outback Sounds (22 May)

The signature Trail event and spectacular finale at Buchanan Park, featuring major headline artists, local talent, Outback experiences, food, makers and community-led activations. *Ticketed event.*

OUTBACK TRAIL 2026 IMPACT STATISTICS

- 7,650+ attendees visited across 16 days
- 2,339 of these attendees visited from out of region
- 21,684 bed nights spent in Queensland
- \$2.6M in direct visitor spend injected into the local economy
- 82 Queenslanders were employed by QMF, including 41 Queensland First Nations artists and art workers

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ABOUT QMF

Queensland Music Festival (QMF) has been transforming lives and communities through music since 1999.

QMF is a not-for-profit funded by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland. Every dollar generated or received is invested back into creating impact for the communities we serve. QMF's iconic music and cultural experiences bring Queensland's identity to life, while creating social, cultural and economic impact for communities right across Queensland.

ABOUT QLD MUSIC TRAILS

QLD Music Trails are QMF's flagship initiative launched with the bold ambition of turning Queensland's extraordinary landscapes into world-class music destinations. A decade-long vision designed as a cultural legacy project in the lead-up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, each trail is co-designed with local communities to create unforgettable journeys that generate tourism, support artists, create jobs and strengthen social cohesion.