



9th – 12th June 2023
Breeze Holiday Parks - Mary River

Newsletter No 3. May 2023

Artist announcement!

The 51st Top Half Folk Festival is excited to announce an incredible line up of artists. Here's a taste of what's in store from Friday evening through to Sunday night.

Concerts and performances

Concerts will feature our valued festival patron Ted Egan AO, Scotty Balfour and Bob Barford (from the well-known Bloodwood band and artists in their own right), Darwin's very own Crocodile Country and The Boats Ashore.

WA regular Phil Beck has an extensive repertoire of traditional and contemporary folk songs which he accompanies with dextrous finger picking and a fine voice.

A strong line up of local and interstate artists Alison Mapleson, Mandy Connell, Crystal Robins, Bob Sharp, as well as South of the Berrimah Line, who used to come from Katherine and Jabiru, and now come from everywhere; will delight us with their exclusive performances.

The Buffettes, Gleny Rae, Katie Harder, Jessie May & Sally Balfour, are an alt-country-folk band performing original songs. Swapping instruments to accompany each other's original songs they first performed to sell-out crowds in Tamworth this year.

In 2021 'The Shavings', a mens choir from Mparntwe, Alice Springs wowed us with their fantastic songs and great harmonies. This year's festival will see Emma Trenorden and The Splinter Sisters women's choir performing and they are bringing The Shavings with them! These two acapella groups will take the festival by storm, both as individual groups and combined. They'll be running a workshop too!

The Speed Concert on Saturday afternoon gives everyone the opportunity to perform who hasn't been listed on the program. Add your name to the whiteboard for 10 minutes of folkie fame.

Sunday afternoon the 'Long concert' will feature Phil Gray, Apocalyptic Breakdown, Shaun Roche, Dave Bowers, Adam Scriven, Campbell, Dave Garnham, June Mills and Alice Cotton.

Dad and Dave's Folk Quiz – Every year Scotty Balfour and Dave Evans like to test our folk knowledge to see if we know more than they do. Two teams will battle it out for the coveted prize – and there is always loads of fun and laughter.



The Poets Breakfast - Back by popular demand!

Everyone gets an opportunity to tell a few yarns, share poems and stories while enjoying your morning coffee/tea/cornflakes/toast at the Poets Breakfast. The perfect way to start your festival day!

A tribute to Jim Smith will be held on Saturday morning led by Jayne Nankivell. Bring your Australian poems and anecdotes to share. On Sunday Alex Steffan, a published poet who lives in Darwin, will lead the breakfast and share their poems. A treat not to be missed.

Workshops

The Top Half Folk Festival is not just a chance to enjoy incredible artist performances, it is also an opportunity to get involved, be inspired and learn something new. A range of informative and enjoyable workshops are listed. Below are just a few not to be missed.

Seriously good songwriters - a celebration of NT songwriters in an intimate, honest and open performance. This is a chance to hear from a number of Territory singer/songwriters who will sing their songs, and tell us the backstory to their creations.

Team Choice – Stewie’s Songs

An original member of the Top End Folk Club (that’s over 50 years ago!), Paul Stewart has advised that this year will be his last presentation and he has handed over the reins to his reliable team to present their favourite songs from past presentations.

We thank Stewie for discovering and sharing some absolute gems at the ‘Top Half’ over the past 40+ years!

As a special tribute to Aunty Kathy Mills OAM, Jeff Corfield will present **Old Darwin Tunes and Ditties**. Jeff says, “Aunty Kathy was my ‘window’ into the rich musical heritage of that ‘old Darwin’ culture”. This workshop is not to be missed!

Bluegrass banjo with Jenny Shimmin - one of the pioneers of bluegrass banjo in Australia. Jenny has played with many of the greats and performed in many bluegrass festivals throughout the USA.

In addition, there are workshops on guitar, ukulele, bush dancing, Scottish dancing, song craft and a special medieval sword fighting display!

Got kids? If they are 12 and under they can come to the festival for free, and there’s lots of fun things for them to do. They can learn craft skills, create something unique, join in the music and story telling.

On Saturday there will be a Scavenger hunt with a prize for the winner and on Sunday Larrakia elder June Mills will tell the story of Witladla, a little scrub fowl who has lost his necklace. This story is filled with original songs, puppets that reference Larrakia designs and fun interactions. Young audiences are sure to be captivated.

Sometimes the adults want to join the kids workshops too - we love that and encourage everyone to get involved.

AUSTRAL TO HEADLINE

In all the excitement you may have forgotten that Austral, winners of the Traditional Folk Album of the Year at the 2022 Australian Folk Music Awards and nominated for a Music Victoria Award, are our interstate headliners at the Festival!

A fully-charged, four-piece Australian tunes band combining didgeridoo, Irish pipes, high energy fiddling, journeying songs and energetic foot percussion. Their music is infectiously danceable and you may find it hard to resist the urge to get up and join the dance party yourself. They have developed their own high-energy live stage sound and continue to receive critical acclaim for their 2022 debut album ‘Thylacine’. Austral are shaping a new



face for music from Celtic roots (and branches) at festivals at home and abroad and are a rising band not to be missed.

Austral will also be running three exciting workshops. This is an opportunity to learn from the experts!

- 'Choonbacker' - How to listen out for chord changes in a music session and provide rhythm support with bouzouki, mandolin or guitar.
- 'Chiller's fiddle' - Learn how to get rid of your classical violin training and relax when playing fiddle tunes fit for sessions down the pub or in the festival tent.
- 'Will it blend?' - Ensemble workshop/Q&A on how to arrange traditional tunes and instrumentation in a modern way.

Artwork – T-shirts – Tea towels

The 51st Top Half Folk Festival **poster design** was created by artist Jen Scott. Her design features the bush chook, the star on our new logo designed by Sally Balfour!

As with all of Jen Scott's designs she has used many animals from the Top End landscape. We thank Jen for the time she takes to produce the designs and look forward every festival to seeing what she creates.

T-shirts will be available to buy for \$30, and there'll be the opportunity to screen print the Festival design on to **your own t-shirt, bag or tea towel** during the festival. REMEMBER to bring a light coloured t-shirt, tea towel or whatever you wish to print. It's also a great activity to do with your kids - make sure you bring a shirt for them too!

A Commemorative Tea Towel has been created and hand printed by the very talented Jayne Nankivell, featuring the new and the old logos. Limited quantity available - \$30 each.

Do you need a bus to the Festival? – Top End Folk Club runs a small private bus from Darwin CBD (and will stop at various accommodation as required) and then onto site. Contact secretary@topendfolkclub.org to make a booking and for availability.

Check the website for new FAQs and a Draft Program!!

- FAQs – <https://topendfolkclub.org/festival-faq>
- Draft Program – <https://topendfolkclub.org/festival-program>

Book your tickets today!

Available at: <https://topendfolkclub.org/book-tickets> or <https://www.trybooking.com/CGFCL>

- Weekend – Day – Concert – Youth tickets available.
- Kids 12 and under are FREE!

Keep up to date with the Festival through our Facebook page or the web site: <https://facebook.com/tophalffolkfestival> or <https://topendfolkclub.org/top-half-folk-festival>

We look forward to seeing you there!

