

## Exploring the feasibility of hosting “Mardi Gras in the Desert 2025” in Port Augusta

To elevate regional tourism and grow and strengthen local LGQBTI+ initiatives, the Port Augusta City Council, along with key stakeholders, will convene this week to discuss the feasibility of hosting a 'Mardi Gras in the Desert 2025' event in Port Augusta. Additionally, stakeholders will discuss potential sponsorship and funding to support the event, as well as engaging the community's involvement.

Council aims to establish a working party tasked with conducting a thorough feasibility study to determine the viability of hosting a Mardi Gras event locally. The proposed event, inspired by the renowned Sydney Mardi Gras, seeks to celebrate diversity, inclusivity, and the vibrant LGQBTI+ community against the backdrop of the Flinders Ranges and Outback landscape.

The feasibility study will encompass various crucial aspects, including potential collaborations with the Sydney Mardi Gras organisers and the Broken Heel festival organisers to align with their event, assessment of financial sponsors, exploration of state and federal funding opportunities, grants availability, and evaluating the anticipated impact on regional tourism.

"This initiative underscores our commitment to fostering inclusivity and celebrating diversity within our community," stated Linley Shine, Mayor of Port Augusta. "Hosting the '2025 Mardi Gras in the Desert' presents an exciting opportunity to showcase our city as an inclusive and welcoming destination while also stimulating economic growth through increased tourism."

Linley Shine, Mayor of Port Augusta, emphasised, "Our dedication to promoting inclusivity and embracing diversity within our community is highlighted by the initiative. Hosting a '2025 Mardi Gras in the Desert,' will be a chance to exhibit our city as a vibrant, inviting and diverse destination, while also stimulating economic development and increase tourism visitation."

Council CEO John Banks stated 'The working party will engage with local and regional stakeholders, tourism providers, State, Federal and not for profit agencies, community groups, and representatives from the LGQBTI+ community to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered throughout the feasibility study process'.

"We believe that the '2025 Mardi Gras in the Desert' has the potential to not only provide a platform for celebration but also spark important conversations around equality and acceptance," remarked Theresa Hines Councils Manager of Strategy and representative from the organising committee. "By collaborating with various stakeholders, we aim to create an event that resonates with both locals and visitors alike."

The first meeting is being held this Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March at 9am in the Yarta Purtli Art Gallery. Email [communitydevelopment@portaugusta.sa.gov.au](mailto:communitydevelopment@portaugusta.sa.gov.au) if you wish to join the feasibility study.

As discussions progress, further updates regarding the feasibility study and potential developments will be shared with the community.

For media inquiries or further information, please contact Councils Media and Communications officer: 08 8641 9100.

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