

Oatlands Highland Gathering

Callington Park

Saturday 5th April 2025



Event Summary & Evaluation

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200 Years On there's still plenty of ways to get held up on the Heritage Highway at Oatlands

Massed Bands Street Parade



Oatlands Highland Gathering 2025





Introduction

Pipe Bands Tasmania (PBT), have traditionally run their events (approximately four a year), in Ross Campbell Town and Longford. There was an event held in Richmond for many years as well, but that unfortunately faded away a number of years ago.

The Deputy General Manager of Southern Midlands Council approached the Deputy Chairman of PBT, a long time friend, and asked if it would be possible if one of the PBT events could be held in Oatlands, as Highland Gatherings link very well to the heritage of Oatlands, given there were various Scottish and Irish Regiments, along with their Pipers and Drummers that called Oatlands their Regimental Barracks throughout the 1800s. Further he said that the sound of the Massed Bands playing 'Scotland the Brave', along with the 'Black Bear,' which is the traditional music they play when the Regiments march back to barracks of an evening, would bring smiles & great pleasure to the assembled crowds in Oatlands.

The two of them then also thought that they would explore the opportunity of including the Callington Mill Distillery in the event. Callington Mill Distillery generously offered to provide sponsorship for the event. With a history stretching back as far as the 11th Century, Scottish whisky, also known as Scotch, is an important part of the Scottish and Celtic identity and a perfect fit for a Highland Gathering. With Callington Mill Distillery's Award winning Distillery building design and Award winning Whisky it provided a wonderful and unique connection for the event.

The Deputy Chairman of PBT took the idea to PBT, they embraced the opportunity and agreed to hold their 2025 State Championships in Oatlands.

What better place for a Highland Gathering could there be but Oatlands?

- Oatlands has the largest number of intact Georgian buildings in a Village environment in Australia;*
- It is truly a 'living & active' historic Village;*

These are just a few reasons why it is highly appropriate that Oatlands is recognised as the perfect location in Tasmania and indeed, Australia, to host a Highland Gathering.

"If you have Gaelic, Celtic, and/or Scottish ancestry?" The Community were asked, "then to join us, after pressing kilts, tuning bagpipes, and donning tartans." They were asked to come dressed for the occasion even if just for the love of the sound of the pipes and drums.



Why We Did This

Council wanted to...

- Use a significant event to bring the Community together and focus on the many endearing aspects of Oatlands and to demonstrate what can happen when everyone is engaged & benefiting in 'a whole of Village event'. Creating a Win – Win experience for the whole Community;
- Respond to a large number of people in Oatlands who were keen in having a 'Highlands focused cultural event';
- Raise the profile and tourist experience (intra-state as well as inter-state) of Oatlands & the Southern Midlands;
- Showcase Oatlands' heritage buildings to the general public; and
- Showcase Oatlands as a 'living historic Village' with a considerable amount of Celtic pedigree.



Callington Mill Distillery wanted to...

- As a Partner, add value and creativity to the event in supporting PBT and Council;
- Support a culturally significant event that meaningfully connected around their passion for award winning Whisky; and the cultural aspects of Scottish heritage;
- Offer a lunch menu of Scottish delicacies to complement the spirit of the event; and
- Trial a Barrel Racing event to introduce some Highland Games activities.





How Did We Do It and What Made it a Success

We

- *Established a Working Group in supporting the event*
 - *Tony Coen OAM, Deputy Chairman of Pipe Bands Tasmania (PBT)*
 - *Rizk Mawass, General Manager Callington Mill Distillery (CMD);*
 - *Andrew Benson, Deputy General Manager, Southern Midlands Council (SMC)*
- the Working Group drew on their respective Teams in energetically moving the project forward on a very tight timeline;*
- *Embraced the professionalism and organisational ability of PBT with their well renowned piping and drumming events;*
- *Developed a comprehensive Event Management Plan;*
- *Had great social media support through the Heritage Highway Tourism Region Inc, Destination Southern Tasmania, and CMD promoting the event through their client base Facebook, as well as other advocates;*
- *Understood the learnings from the six Heritage & Bullock Festivals since 2018;*
- *Engaged with the Oatlands High Street Traders;*
- *Honoured the underpinning principles, of Oatlands events, ie Integrity, Traditional, Authenticity, Skills, Craftsmanship, & Heritage; and*
- *Recognised and harnessed the specific roles, energies and passions of the three organisations in the Working Group.*



Ootlands Highland Gathering 2025

Massed Bands - Official Opening



Mayor Edwin Batt and the Massed Bands forming up ready for the official opening of the State Championships



Mayor Edwin Batt's Speech at the Official Opening

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends, and Enthusiasts of Highland Culture, my name is Edwin Batt and I am the Mayor of Southern Midlands Council. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this spectacular celebration of heritage, music, and community—the Oatlands Highland Gathering 2025.

Today, we come together to honour the traditions of the highlands, a culture that has travelled across oceans and generations, bringing with it the evocative sounds of the pipes and the beating heart of the drums. These sounds stir something deep within us - pride, connection, and the joy of belonging.

I extend my gratitude to the organisers, volunteers, and, of course, the talented pipe bands who have travelled from near and far to be with us. Without your dedication and passion, events like this would not be possible. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to keeping this tradition alive and thriving.

I would like to acknowledge

Pipe Bands Tasmania; Chairman - Michelle Haysom; Deputy Chairman - Tony Coen OAM; Deputy Chairman - Peter Scales; Secretary Nick Haysom; along with the other Committee Members

The Judges and Officials at the Oatlands Highland Gathering:

*Stewart Ims – Contest Supervisor; David Telford – Piping (from Victoria); Dougal McConnell – Drumming; Peter Scales – Drill & Dress,
Along with*

Council Officers who have supported the Gathering with logistics along with marketing; and finally

Callington Mill Distillery who have provided sponsorship for the event, along with crafting the Barrel Racing competition for us here this afternoon at 1230, where we are now standing.

The metaphorical connection between Whisky, Bagpipes and Tartans is unmistakably Celtic and this location in Callington Park alongside the Mill with its sandstone and Georgian buildings, which would have echoed the pipes and drums of Regiments who would have been Garrisoned here, in Oatlands during the mid to late 1800s, is highly appropriate for such a Gathering as this.

This gathering is more than a competition or performance. It is a celebration of resilience and spirit - a nod to the past, a vibrance in the present, and a promise for the future. Whether you are here as a seasoned piper, a first-time drummer, or a captivated audience member, you are part of this legacy.

Let us celebrate the art, skill, and camaraderie displayed here today. May the music lift our spirits, bring us together, and remind us of the beauty of shared traditions. With that, I am honoured to declare the Oatlands Highland Gathering – the State Championships officially open. May the tunes be strong, the steps be lively, and the memories everlasting! Thank you, and enjoy the day!



Pipe Bands Tasmania – Participants & Adjudicators



The Old Pretenders
Pipe Band





Selection Of Marches:

- 1st Tasmania Police Pipe Band
- 2nd St Andrews Caledonian Pipe Band No1
- 3rd Burnie Highland Pipe Band
- 4th St Andrews Caledonian Pipe Band No 2



Medley:

- St Andrews Caledonian Pipe Band No 1



March, Strathspey and Reel:

- Tasmania Police Pipe Band



Limited Area Quickstep:

- St Andrews Caledonian Pipe Band

Dress:

- Tasmania Police Pipe Band



March Off :

- Tasmania Police Pipe Band

The Old Pretenders
Pipe Band



The flag of St Andrew was raised on the Oatlands Council Chamber flagpole to show a warm welcome to participants and visitors alike.



The Village was picture perfect, as was the site thanks to the Council works team.



Signage on the Midland Highway (Heritage Highway).



EVENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

*Oatlands Highland Gathering 2025
Callington Park Oatlands – 5th April 2025*

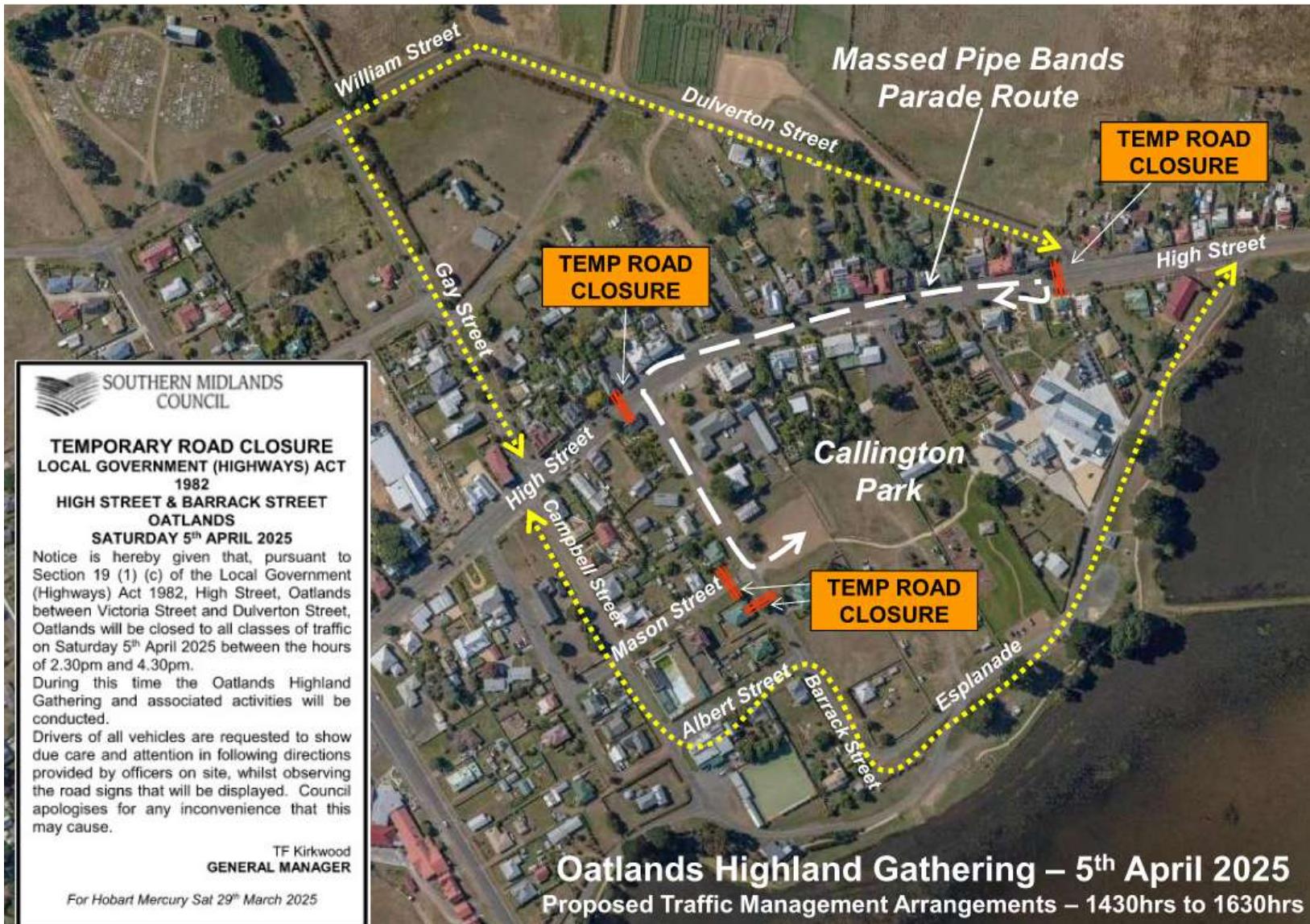
Prepared
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March 2025

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A 46 page Event Management Plan was developed to cover logistics, safety, traffic management, food vendors, facilities and related matters, ensuring that all of the Gathering's elements were covered with rigor & efficiency, ensuring an incident free event.

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Callington Mill Distillery – Entertainment & Sponsorship



The Callington Mill Distillery Barrel Races – The Highland Games component of the 2025 Gathering. This was a fun and competitive event celebrating Scottish whisky heritage, requiring strength, strategy, and precision. Competitors rolled a whisky cask across a designated track, racing against time to win the top prize. 1st Place: 1 Bottle of Entropy Whisky (valued at \$160), 2nd Place: Trio Whisky Pack (valued at \$159), and 3rd Place: 1 Bottle of Enigma Whisky (valued at \$95)



SCOTTISH THEMED LUNCH

Entrée Options:

- **Smoked Duck and Beetroot Salad (N, GF)**

Smoked duck breast on a bed of radicchio and chicory, confit beetroot, orange segments, roasted hazelnuts, and a drizzled whisky vinaigrette. *Pairs with earthy or unpeated oaky whisky.*

- **Haggis Bon Bon (D, G)**

Savory crust haggis croquettes, served with house whisky aioli. *Pairs with heavily sherried and full-bodied whisky.*



Main Course Options:

- **Chicken Balmoral (D, GF)**

Haggis stuffed chicken, served with neeps and tatties, sautéed Tuscan kale, and whisky cream sauce. *Pairs with cinnamon spice, cherry, and vanilla notes whisky.*

- **Venison Eye Fillet (GF, D)**

Spice-rubbed venison fillet, braised red cabbage, crusted oatmeal roast potato, served with whisky jus. *Pairs with smoky or sherried whisky.*



Dessert Options:

- **Raspberry Cranachan Trifle (D, G)**

A twist on a Scottish classic with layered whisky cream, fresh raspberries, and crunchy toasted oats. *Pairs with a light, floral whisky.*

- **Brown Butter Pecan and Pear Tart (D, G, N)**

A rich nutty crunch tart, served with vanilla ice cream and whisky caramel sauce. *Pairs with lightly peated whisky.*



BBQ at the Drovers Hut in Callington Park



Oatlands Highland Gathering 2025





What Was Achieved – ‘Reinventing Rural Places Research

[EXTRACT]

‘Reinventing Rural Places - The extent and impact of festivals in rural and regional Australia’ 2009; University of Wollongong

“It is clear that generating income is not one of the main priorities of rural festivals; their real purpose is promoting an activity, theme or locality. This is not to say that festivals cannot generate benefits of an economic nature for their local communities. In 2009, with an estimated attendance of 9,500, the Parkes Elvis Revival Festival brought in \$6 million in direct visitor expenditure (at an average of \$643 per visitor). In 2008, with an attendance of 22,000, the Deniliquin Ute Muster generated direct visitor expenditure of \$13 million (at an average of \$610 per person). Even in much smaller festivals, their relative impact is notable: at the Gromfest youth surf carnival in Lennox Head, Northern NSW, 1200 visitors attended, spending \$472 per person on average. This translated into nearly \$600,000 of spending, injected into the small town over the course of a weekend.

Indeed, herein lies a common characteristic of festivals: their organisers may make no or little direct profit, but instead they catalyse meaningful monetary benefits for their surrounding communities as a flow-on effect – through tourism visitation expenditure, through the hiring of local expertise, and sourcing local services and materials. Benefits are felt most by an array of local small businesses that are functionally connected to the festival, such as cafes and restaurants, sound and lighting equipment hire, waste management, hotels and motels, pubs, printers, advertising agencies, legal services and catering companies.”

[END OF EXTRACT]



University of Wollongong





What Was Achieved – Visitors, Volunteers, Economic Benefit, and Marketing

Through a careful analysis it is estimated that in the order of **520 people attended the Gathering on the day**.

Based on an estimated spend in accordance with the aforementioned Report 'Reinventing Rural Places' \$50/person is quite a conservative estimate, therefore multiply the **\$50 x the number of attendees 520 = \$26,000.00** that stays in the Community as an economic benefit from the Gathering.

There were an **estimated 200 volunteer hours** provided in the planning, activities and windup of the Gathering.

Social Media Marketing

The Heritage Highway Tourism Region Association included the Oatlands Highland Gathering 2025 event in an online article and funded a boosted post campaign dedicated to the event pointing to this article.

The results from the boosted posts are below:

Post impressions (how many times it was put in front of anybody)	20,493
Post reach (how many unique individuals saw it, some may have seen it multiple times)	12,996
Post results (click throughs)	1,500
Page views of the blog/article https://hobartandbeyond.com.au/blog/oatlands-highland-gathering/	2,062

In addition Callington Mill Distillery provided a major Facebook campaign to their customer base.

ABC Nick Haysom, Secretary of PBT was interviewed by the ABC Mornings Show about the event.

The image shows five Facebook posts arranged in a grid. Each post includes the post time, battery level, and a link to the original post.

- Hobart and Beyond** (14:39): Hobart and Beyond https://hobartandbeyond.com.au. Post: Oatlands Highland Gathering. The Oatlands Highland Gathering, bringing a spectacular celebration of Scottish culture, music, and tradition to Tasmania's ...
- Discover Tasmania** (14:27): Discover Tasmania https://www.discovertasmania.com.au. Post: Oatlands Highland Gathering | Concert, performance or show. 13 Mar 2025 — The Oatlands Highland Gathering returns to Callington Park bringing a spectacular celebration of Scottish culture, music, and tradition...
- Hobart and Beyond** (14:27): Hobart and Beyond https://hobartandbeyond.com.au. Post: Oatlands Highland Gathering. Experience the Spirit of Scotland at the Oatlands Highland Gathering. If you love the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, you will ...
- Southern Midlands Council** (14:27): Southern Midlands Council https://www.southernmidlands.tas.gov.au PDF. Post: Oatlands Highland Gathering. Oatlands Highland Gathering. Saturday 5th April 2025 (9.30am to 4.00pm). Callington Park, Tas...
- Callington Mill Distillery** (14:27): Callington Mill Distillery https://callingtonmilldistillery.com. Post: Oatlands Highland Gathering & Whisky Experience (5th April 2025). Saturday, 5th April 2025 | 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM | Callington Park, Oatlands For the first time ever, Oatlands will host the Pipe Band State...



Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to those people who have contributed to make this Gathering enjoyable and indeed a success. There are too many to mention them all individually here, but they will know who they are and they will reflect, I am sure, in a very positive manner as they have read through this document. Some specific acknowledgements are noted below.

The Drum Majors, Pipers and Drummers who made the event such a wonderful experience for all who attended;

The Gathering's Judges and Adjudicator's who judged the rigor and professionalism of the contestants;

Pipe Band Tasmanian Committee Board Members for their confidence in working with Callington Mill Distillery and Southern Midlands Council to bring the event together;

The Working Group and their respective Teams were a passionate and energetic group that worked together exceptionally well;

Tasmania Police for their assistance and support for the road closures and throughout the Gathering;

The Broadmarsh Elderslie Progress Association Inc. for the BBQ in the Drover's Hut that supported the Gathering;

The High Street Traders and indeed the whole Community embraced the spirit of the Gathering, showcasing Oatlands to be a wonderful 'living' historic village;

The Volunteers that participated in the Gathering were amazing;

The sponsorship by Callington Mill Distillery has been greatly appreciated, along with the Barrel Race, our 'taster' for the Highland Games at the event next year;

The Mayor, Councillors, General Manager and Council Officers of the Southern Midlands Council have been a main stay for the overall logistics of the Gathering; and finally

Those community members and visitors who attended wearing their kilts, which certainly added to the significance of the event.



APPENDIX – Program





Pipe Bands Tasmanian - State Competition Finals



Program

0945 The competition starts with a selection of marches, including Dress and March off, then Medley and then the March, Strathspey and Reel.

1050 The Bands will play on the march, into the Callington Park parade ground through the gateway in the sandstone wall then will form up in front of the officials marquee

1100 Official Opening by Mayor Edwin Batt

1110 Massed Bands will play and continue the competition

1200 Lunch

1230 Barrel Rolling Competition by Callington Mill Distillery

1300 Bands perform limited area quickstep

1315 Bands Public Display
- Four bands 10 minutes each

1420 Massed bands form up for step-off

1500 Competition Results announced

1530 Mass bands parade along Barrack Street and High Street within the Oatlands Village

1630 Finish

Tunes

Advance – Bonnie Dundee & One Hundred Pipers

Retreat - Scotland the Brave & Badge of Scotland

Massed Bands – Street Parade

Mari's Wedding & Barren Rocks

6/8 Drum Break (PBA massed band score)

Green Hills & Battle's O're

6/8 Drum Break (PBA massed band score)

Scotland the Brave & Badge of Scotland

6/8 Drum Break (PBA massed bands score)

Bonnie Dundee & One Hundred Pipers

6/8 Drum Break (PBA massed bands score)



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