

North-East wins fight to keep Off-Grid Living Festival

Victoria's best sustainability festival moves to new venue.



Wangaratta, Victoria Jun 13, 2023 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Since 2018 North-East Victoria has hosted one of Australia's best sustainability events, the [Off-Grid Living Festival](#). With its wide variety of topics covered and ability to present sustainability in a fun and interactive way, this festival attracts thousands of people from all over Australia. It has given North-East Victoria the amazing opportunity to showcase all that the region offers and highlight our dedication to sustainability, renewable energy and climate action.

This year festival organisers, Kate and Ralph Nottingham, announced that the festival had outgrown its location at Eldorado's Centennial Park and they were on the lookout for a new venue that would allow for the anticipated future growth.

Proposals and suggestions came in from all over Victoria and the festival team sited locations from Gippsland, Seymour and Bendigo who were excited about the prospect of hosting the festival in their regions. But eventually these locations were dismissed as a strong collective voice from the North-East community came through, adamant that the festival must stay local. This support won the organisers over and more venues were considered throughout North-East Victoria, and after much deliberation Chilterns old Racecourse was selected as the new venue.

Now known as the Chiltern Equine Park, the racecourse itself has not hosted a horse race since 1982 and the community have been looking for ways to use the parks potential to enhance the towns offerings. "We're thrilled to be able to stay local and to have an opportunity to revitalise an underused community resource and be part of the future growth of the park into a new direction, it has so much

potential and is perfect for a festival like ours” said Mrs Nottingham.

Chiltern Equine Park Committee of Management were equally excited about the pairing, and head of the Committee Neil Ward said ‘We are excited and believe the 44 Ha Chiltern Equine Park with its excellent access of the Hume Highway will prove to be a fantastic home for the Off-Grid Living Festival. Together with the event organisers and Indigo Shire we hope to see the facilities at the Park improved over time for the benefit of all our users and North East Victoria.’

The excitement for the festival's new location has spread through the town of Chiltern as local businesses are anticipating a huge growth in the economy during the festival time (April 2024), with many starting preparations now as accommodation bookings come through. “In recent years we’ve seen that participants are turning their festival experience into longer holidays and stay to explore the region for up to 2 weeks. This is something the whole of the North-East should see the flow on effects from over the Easter holidays when the festival is held” said Mrs Nottingham.

With the location move, the festival now lands within the Indigo Shire, who are excited to support this wonderful event. Major of Indigo Shire Council, Sophie Price announced this week that they are “thrilled that Chiltern will host the 2024 Off-Grid living Festival, planned for April. Not only is hosting the festival great for our local economy, with more than 10,000 people expected to attend, it aligns so well with our commitment to climate action and sustainability. Let’s all get behind this fantastic event and ensure that 2024 will be the first of many years that this event is staged in our backyard.”

The festival organisers not only selected Chiltern because of the land available, during the decision-making process this was backed by a great amount of support and enthusiasm from the Chiltern community. “We wanted to pick another location where the enthusiasm for the festival was high and where the people understood the importance of the topics presented”, said Kate Nottingham, “and we were delighted to find this in abundance within Chiltern, with excited emails, phone calls and offers to help coming in from all over”.

Chiltern Tourism & Development Inc. president, Matt Williams, said ‘We are delighted to have the Off-Grid Living Festival coming to Chiltern. The new location at the Chiltern Equine Park allows for both the festival to grow and Chiltern to continue to prove itself as a pivotal part of Indigo Shire. The economic importance of an event of this magnitude cannot be underestimated and Chiltern stands ready to help ensure the success of the Off-Grid Living Festival in its new home.’



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