

Baralaba school hits 100

Plenty of places to stay for weekend

FEATURE COMPILED BY VERNON GRAHAM

BARALABA State School – whose first pupils were taught in a tent – will celebrate its centenary during the weekend of October 13 and 14.

The school serves the small town of Baralaba, on the Dawson river, and surrounding rural community in central Queensland about 150km west of Gladstone.

Coal mining has also played a big part in the town's economy during much of the past 100 years.

Eighty seven children are enrolled in the school including some descendants of the first pupils in 1918.

These students – Brodie, Elise and Trey McLellan and Abby and Ella Sainsbury – will be involved in an important part of the formal centenary ceremony.

Two of the oldest surviving students – Mavis Lewis (nee Stewart) and Deidre Davey – are still living in Baralaba. Mavis was enrolled in 1930 and Deidre in 1931.

The celebrations kick off on Friday afternoon, October 12, with pre-registration



FROM TENT TO TODAY: Baralaba State School has come a long way since its humble beginnings in a tent but present-day students and teachers also face some challenges but get plenty of rewards.

at the school from 3pm followed by a wine, cheese and art event at the community centre.

Activities step up on Saturday, October 13, with a formal centenary ceremony at the school along with a roll call, school photo and memorabilia displays.

Saturday night will feature a family friendly street party

and old time dance. On Sunday, October 14, smoko and lunch will be available at the Baralaba's renowned historical village.

Ex-students and their families are being encouraged to share memorabilia such as photographs, school work, report cards, school uniform items to enhance the "Doors through the Dec-

ades" display. Baralaba school principal, Kate Davis, said the organisation of the school's centenary celebrations was a great example of a small community working together to make things happen.

"Schools in small towns are a hub of activity. This is a wonderful part of small town life that is not always expe-

rienced in larger places," she said.

"Physical isolation is one of the bigger challenges facing small schools. Technology and networking opportunities with other local schools are often used these days to overcome these hurdles.

"The best part of the job, though, is that I get to know each child in the school."

A RANGE of accommodation options are available for centenary weekend visitors.

- Baralaba Hotel (07) 4998 1102
- Baralaba Show Grounds - Alistair 0417 630 819.
- Alternative accommodation (including billeting) – Polly Bromley (07) 4998 1235
- Myella Farm Stay – Lyn Eather (07) 4998 1290
- Banana Motel – (07) 4995 7232
- Daringa Motel – (07) 4925 6000

Camping will also be available beside the Dawson River at Neville Hewitt Weir (picnic area).

The Baralaba Progress Association has a donation box with the contributions used to make improvements to the facilities in town.

For further information please head to the website <http://www.baralabass.eq.edu.au/100index.htm> or call the school on (07) 4998 2333.

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Helping to make Baralaba great



Schools have always played an integral role in rural and regional communities. Not only are they charged with shaping the minds of our future leaders, but they act as a social hub for the community. Baralaba has remained a strong, tight-knit community because of the work the school has done as the educational and social catalyst of the community over the past 100 years.

Congratulations to all past and present teachers, parents and students on helping the Baralaba State School reach its centenary.



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