

07 May 2021

New Statues to be Unveiled at Never Never Festival

The new 'We of the Never Never' statues will be unveiled in Stan Martin Park at the Never Never Festival in Mataranka on Sunday 16 May 2021.

The six statues depict the various characters of Jeanie Gunn's book 'We of the Never Never' that was made into a movie in the 1980's.

The previous statues, which were regularly visited by tourists, had many cracks and parts of the statues were falling away or faded from the harsh Territory conditions.

After an extensive consultation process with the Mataranka Local Authority, it was requested that these statues be replaced to reflect the significance of the town's history and the quality of life in Mataranka.

The project was funded by the Mataranka Local Authority and Roper Gulf Regional Council, who awarded the contract to construct the new statues to Gillie and Marc from Sydney NSW.

The Never Never Festival will run from Friday 14 May to Sunday 16 May in the town of Mataranka and is an event that embraces the diversity of the Never Never and celebrates Jeanie Gunn's famous 1908 novel, which was responsible for putting Mataranka on the international stage.

Mayor Judy MacFarlane will officially unveil the new bronze statues in Stan Martin Park alongside very special guests, Florence Peters and Sabina Willy.

Florence Peters is the daughter of Dolly Bonson who, as Bett Bett, featured in the novel 'We of the Never Never' and who's character is one of the statues in Stan Martin Park.

The second special guest is Sabina Willy, the actor who played the character of Bett Bett in the 'We of the Never Never' movie, released in 1982.

Mayor Judy MacFarlane is honoured to be able to stand alongside Florence and Sabina to unveil the new statues.

"The Mataranka Community and Council staff are very excited about the completion of this long standing project.

"This is a special event made even more special by having two significant people involved in the 'We of the Never Never' story such as Florence and Sabina attend", said Mayor Judy MacFarlane.

The unveiling of the statues will take place at 9:00am in Stan Martin Park after the Bush Chapel Service.

For more information about the Never Never Festival, visit <https://www.facebook.com/MatarankaNeverNeverFestival>

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Attachment 1: 'The Little Black Princess' statue

The previous statue of Bett Bett (Dolly Bonson) that will be replaced in Stan Martin Park, Mataranka.

