

## BOTANICAL BAZAAR 2021

Perfect weather forecast for the weekend and everything was in place for the best ever Botanical Bazaar. Months of preparation had culminated on Saturday 31 July with:

- Over 80 exhibitors and community groups on site finalising their displays
- 16 food vendors fully stocked and ready to serve
- The site decorated over 2 days by volunteer labour
- Over 2000 tickets pre - sold and cars queued at gate
- Australian Volunteer Coastguard volunteers on site with parking areas marked out
- Nerang Community gardeners ready to show off their hard work
- Local performers booked for a weekend of entertainment
- Celebrity gardening and sustainability speakers ready to deliver a wealth of education
- A wonderful kid's program planned



Then at about 1015, we received the news that the Acting Premier had ordered a snap lockdown of 11 LGAs to manage a Covid outbreak in Brisbane. Given only 6 hours for our exhibitors to bump-out and get to their homes by 4pm, there was only one option - Shutdown the event and suffer the losses involved. Our volunteers and the exhibitors then spent several hours dismantling what they had just created - heartbreaking!

Gold Coast Rotary has refunded all ticket sales, site booking fees for exhibitors and food vendors and hope that a Division 5 Community Grant will cover our committed expenditures. Nothing will recover the over 1000 volunteer hours spent organising the event. Exhibitors have estimated that they lost between \$200,000 and \$350,000 sales and our club's funds to support community causes has been reduced by over \$60,000.

On a positive, we have received so many wonderful encouraging messages and commendations on our team, set up, vibe and event. What a great event we have and one that will continue to grow, engage our club members and be profitable. I have to say the committee that has evolved in such a short timeframe is more than commendable and whilst devastated we have not lost hope and will be back with enthusiasm again next time.

The team at the Australian Institute of Horticulture put together this video for us. It gives an idea of what could have been - <https://youtu.be/eHj-kOK2SYg> and a photo album of shots taken by Andrew Chan has been loaded onto our website <https://goldcoastrotary.org.au/photoalbums/botanical-bazaar-2021>

Sample of Messages received:

- *We absolutely LOVE Botanical Bazaar! It is right up there with the best plant/garden/lifestyle events in Queensland and this group of organisers are totally awesome! We love you guys.... keep up the good work. Seriously, lots of other events are run by people who are not as cool as you guys are. We loved Stacey too, back in the day when she started the event :) but we are THRILLED that the event is in such great hands with the Gold Coast Rotary. Let's do it again sometime!!*
- *This event unlike many others, is so well organised & there are so many creators & makers involved. It takes months of preparation to be organised and presented to the public & the whole festival has an amazing atmosphere which we are so proud to be part of. It's a wonderful thing for the whole community with presenters & visitors coming from far & wide.*
- *Thank you so much for the dedication to this event and wonderful organisation of the Botanical Bazaar. Thank you for supporting our business and we look forward to supporting you next year.*
- *Thanks very much for allowing us to join in on what looked like it was going to be a wonderful expo. The short time we were there we couldn't get over how your group turned the grounds into something magnificent. All your work didn't go unnoticed. We definitely would like to be part of the next bazaar you arrange.*
- *The whole venue looked fantastic, it was very well organised and I look forward to next year.*
- *We were humbled by the support of organisers. Right from when the lockdown was announced.*
- *Congratulations on the great organization and set up for what was promising to be an outstanding day. As someone who was there when the gates opened at 5.30a.m., it was obvious how much work had been put in to get the event organized and to have to cancel was devastating to all.*
- *I just wanted to thank you for your transparency and promptness. It is a really unlucky situation, I'll try to bring more people to your event next time it comes around.*

- *Thanks David – really appreciate how you and the team have handled a really challenging situation and you can rely on our support for next time also.*
- *What an amazing team you all make! The positivity you all ooze to push on is heart-warming. From what I saw today, it would have been the BEST BB yet! And that new entrance.... spectacular!! Stacey Panozzo*
- *Firstly, I wanted to commend you all on how fabulous the Bazaar looked on Saturday. It was spectacular!!! You should be so proud of all you did to pull the event together given the uncertain times we live in. Having visited the Barn and Gecko Hut, the stages and set ups were just perfect and it would have been an honour to present and be involved. Thank you to everyone who made that happen!! Obviously, it wasn't what we all hoped. However, the way your team handled the situation was professional and considerate and again I commend you. This event is such a valuable one on the Gold Coast calendar and it is a shame we didn't get to proceed.*