



28 September 2026

FARMERS ENCOURAGED TO REGISTER EARLY FOR BALES ON THE TRAIL

Farmers across Towong Shire and the Upper Murray are being encouraged to register now for the inaugural *Bales on the Trail*, even if they have not yet started thinking about their hay bale sculpture. The fun, community-focused event will see Towong's country roads transformed into a trail of creative hay bale artworks throughout November, celebrating recovery, resilience and rural imagination.

Registering is simply an expression of interest and does not require a completed sculpture, a detailed plan, or even a finished idea; there's plenty of time for that.

Mayor Peter Tolsher said early registrations would help organisers support participants and ensure the trail delivered the best possible experience for both farmers and visitors.

"One of the biggest misconceptions is that farmers need to have their sculpture underway before they register. That is not the case. In fact, we'd prefer people to register before they start building," Cr Tolsher said.

"Registration only takes about five minutes and lets us know you're interested in getting involved. Once you have registered, we'll make sure you have all the information you need, including the theme details, participation guidelines and plenty of encouragement to help bring your idea to life."

Participants will have the entire month of October to design and construct their sculptures, with entries needing to be completed by 29 October to allow time for photography and inclusion on the official trail map and website before the event launches on 1 November.

The inaugural event theme, *The Magic Between the Pages*, invites farmers to bring books and stories to life through creative hay bale sculptures. From classic children's characters and fairy tales to Australian stories, fantasy adventures and literary legends, participants are encouraged to let their imaginations run wild.

"This is all about having fun, getting creative and showcasing the character of our farming communities," Cr Tolsher said.

"Whether you've already got a brilliant concept in mind or you are still waiting for inspiration to strike, now is the perfect time to put your name down. Gather the family, throw around some ideas and enjoy a bit of friendly rivalry with your neighbours."

Developed as a positive recovery initiative following the 2026 bushfires, Bales on the Trail aims to bring communities together while encouraging visitors to explore the region and support local businesses.

Along with the bragging rights that come from creating one of the trail's standout sculptures, participants will be in the running for a range of prizes, including the prestigious Golden Bale Award and People's Choice Award.

Every participating farmer whose sculpture meets the event guidelines will also receive a complimentary 20kg bag of dry dog food, generously provided by Mars Petcare.

"We have already seen some fantastic enthusiasm for the event and are excited to see what people come up with. Please do not wait until your sculpture is finished to register - put your name down now and then enjoy the month of October bringing your idea to life. We can't wait to see bale masterpieces popping up right across the Upper Murray."

For more information and to register, visit balesonthetrail.com.au

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