

# #wearecampbelltown

In the Spring edition I mentioned Campbelltown Council's very practical, hands-on and effective response to the Covid19 shutdown and aftermath. When brilliant young local Director, Daniel Fenech of Brick Studios approached me with an idea to help promote local businesses, I directed him to Campbelltown Council. "They will be all over this idea," I told him - They were.



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Daniel is a highly-credentialed, award winning Director who is born and bred Campbelltown. He moved away, worked hard making his name and intentionally came back to Macarthur to play a part in the growing sophistication of our district. He also wanted to live back in his hometown and to encourage and foster talented young locals into his industry. He's a lovely guy I have known for many years.

Daniel's idea was to produce short films telling the stories behind local businesses. He initially approached me to get some leads on which businesses had interesting stories. We obviously started with hospitality, given my special interest. The next time we spoke the project had progressed well and he had developed a much stronger vision. Then the

issue had become sponsorship for the project. That's when I directed him to Campbelltown Council. I knew they would love it. They had shown their hand in regards to how they would help local business and it had been very effective and passionate.

With Council on board the focus evolved into uncovering hidden gems; showcasing experiences and culture as well as hospitality, although quite a few of the nine facilities featured are food and beverage based. The final list was edited down from a larger number, mostly on the grounds of how the stories will come together as a set.

Next I met with Daniel at Campbelltown Arts Centre for a coffee (and amazing carrot cake),





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a couple of weeks before he started shooting the content. It was an exciting hour long chat. There is so much synergy between his project and my magazine, my enthusiasm led to more and more ideas between our media. We are somewhat media partners aiming to lift Campbelltown from within. I told Daniel a story that formed a part of my motivation to create 'in Macarthur' magazine.

I read an article 20 years ago, I think it was about Cairns or Townsville. Apparently like Campbelltown, the town suffered from an historical self-esteem problem and it wasn't until tourism kicked off that the locals started to believe. A developer planned to build a high rise resort and locals almost universally wondered why. Once it was created and the tourists arrived, the locals had their eyes opened to their own town. They became the best advertisement for tourism by simply being proud of their town. The article made the point that until you have the locals on board, it's very difficult to convince anyone else. The best marketing for a region is the locals advocating their region.

My magazine was based on the same premise. I never intended for 'in Macarthur' magazine to be a tourism guide, it's for locals. I wanted to inform and influence the locals about their own region. What Daniel and Campbelltown Council are doing with this project is similar. It's not a hard sell, it's just telling stories. Stories that will surprise, inform and influence.

I would love the other two Macarthur councils to join this project. Macarthur is definitely into the realms of becoming a weekend destination for Sydneysiders. Together we have a very attractive 'product'. Our individual stories bundled together create a character and style all our own. Most of us involved in marketing Macarthur have known that for a long time. Brick Studios is the conduit for our growing self-confidence.

The two weeks of shooting took place in October and the product should be available by the time you are reading this. I attended a couple of the shoots but I was busy with our Weddings & Functions Annual. I got to Grosik Polish Deli in Campbelltown and to Suzie Dukes at Ingleburn. The sheer unadulterated joy this project is creating is wonderful to experience. Of course all the businesses involved are hugely appreciative of the opportunity and it doesn't take long around Daniel and his team to realise they are highly professional.

I have seen early releases and even the unfinished versions are brilliant. By the time you are reading this, you might have seen them by now. Each one captures the story behind the business or facility featured. Each one affects you too - and that is the essence of good story telling.

Bozena's Polish deli story might move you to tears, then you'll be laughing with Suzie Dukes' owner Michael, "I'm the Duke", and be



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from left: Campbelltown's Mayor, Cr George Brticevic; Daniel Fenech; Michael 'The Duke' - photography by instagram@cmytown



made proud by our Arts Centre's inclusive arts programs. You will definitely learn something new about Campbelltown - even longtime locals.

The videos certainly project a friendly impression for the city, one that is sure to interest outsiders. Maybe even break down some stereotypes.

When Daniel and I spoke at Campbelltown Arts Centre he expressed a desire to soundtrack the video project using local artists. He achieved that and the results are stunning. Artists like Byron Mark, Like Angels, Luke Koteras, Kate Tomlinson from White Clover Music, Kay Proudlove and Gus Harris all created and performed their music for the We Are Campbelltown project.

I'm pleased to have had some involvement in this project, albeit minor. I'm proud of Daniel and his Brick Studios team and I'm proud of the business people involved too, but most of all I'm proud of Campbelltown Council. Their foresight and imagination is very un-council like. Their perception that Daniel was the man for the job is admirable and their genuine heartfelt intent is wonderful.

Go out of your way to watch the videos, laugh, cry and be stirred with pride. 'We Are Campbelltown' Edition 1 is a brilliant first step. I'm sure there will be more to come.

[www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/wearecampbelltown](http://www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/wearecampbelltown)

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