



# Media release



The Festival of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games

Embargo on release of schedule of events in its entirety before 23 February 2006.

January 2006

**Festival Melbourne2006**

## **Free performances and live games action around Victoria**

**Festival Melbourne2006, the cultural festival of the Commonwealth Games, will extend across Victoria as four major regional centres will host live sites and cultural festival activities during Games time.**

**Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong and Moe will each broadcast Commonwealth Games sporting events live on large-scale outdoor screens during the games period, complimented by performances from the best artists and musicians from around the Commonwealth. In addition, local artists will work alongside visiting artists to facilitate unique cultural exchanges in these four major Victorian regional centres.**

**Festival Melbourne2006, an integral part of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games and the largest free cultural festival ever held in Australia, will be an international event offering 11 days of non-stop music, dance, circus, street theatre and visual art in a range of venues across Victoria and in the great outdoors.**

### **Ballarat:**

Camp Street, one of Ballarat's oldest streets, will be the location of a range of celebrations, with over 500 local, international and national performers and visual artists scheduled to take part.

The Festival will have a floral theme, and two well known groups who originated in Ballarat, EARTH and Ratartat, will transform Alfred Deakin Place into an exotic garden with inflatable plants, vines and flowers, and local community members will work with the artists to animate the space with performances.

Ballarat's renowned Begonia Festival parade will be held on Saturday 18 March, to coincide with the Games, and the city will also celebrate its relationship with adopted Commonwealth nation, India, hosting an exchange with some 400 Indian artists including performances from renowned Indian percussion group the Dhol Foundation, the Jaipur Kawa Brass Band from Rajasthan and Indian sarod player Amjad Ali Khan.

Ballarat will also host a number of international artists during the Games, including a group of Indian rafaogars, darners from Rajasthan, who will also be visiting just prior to the Games in a Craft Victoria residency. And the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery will also feature an exhibition of traditional handmade Kenyan huts.

### **Highlights:**

#### **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March**

Richard Frankland and the Charcoal Club (Australia): award winning indigenous singer and songwriter.  
EARTH (Australia): leading innovators of Australian physical and visual theatre.

### **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March,**

The Dhol Foundation (India/UK): Indian percussive group.

### **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March**

The Tongan Royal Corps of Musicians: 50 piece marching band.

Pammy and Spin (Australia/UK): street theatre with juggling, balance and Chinese manipulation acts.

Strange Fruit (Australia): amazing performers who combine dance, music and spectacle on four metre high poles in the air. Amjad Ali Khan (India): internationally acclaimed sarod player.

### **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March**

The African Showboyz (Ghana) who perform a unique blend of tribal African drumming, dance and fire eating.

Nii Tettey Tetteh and the Kusun Ensemble: extraordinary group of musicians and dancers from Ghana.

### **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March**

Black Rose (Fiji): popular Fijian band performing traditional music with a twist – euro dance meets pacific reggae.

### **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March**

Circus Solarus, (Australia): a top street theatre troupe with highly entertaining roving acts

Jaipur Kawa Brass Band (India): will provide a colourful and fabulous finale with gypsy dance and music.

Further program information: [www.ballarat.vic.gov.au](http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au), or [www.melbourne2006.com.au](http://www.melbourne2006.com.au)

## **Bendigo**

Centred around Bendigo's historic Town Hall and the Civic and Library gardens, Bendigo will celebrate its adopted relationship with Scotland with a series of banners depicting Australian and Scottish themes and emblems.

Human Momentum, a high profile public art event involving young Bendigo locals, world renowned circus artists Dislocate, internationally acclaimed bamboo design and performance company Bambuco and members of the Bendigo Chinese community, will see an interactive bamboo 'playground' develop on Bendigo's Library forecourt.

And the Bendigo Art Gallery will feature the work of acclaimed Scottish designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh in an exhibition titled *Designs for a Modern World*, the highlight of which will be Mackintosh's celebrated Hill House writing desk, the world's most expensive piece of 20<sup>th</sup> century furniture.

### **Highlights:**

#### **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March**

Opening ceremony celebrations in the Civic Gardens, with a performance by local indigenous group, Red Ochre Dancers.

#### **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March**

Strange Fruit (Australia): amazing performers combine dance, music and spectacle on four metre high poles in the air.

Kutch Edwards (Australia): renowned indigenous musician.

Wicked Aura Batacuda (Singapore): amazing percussionists with their Brazilian samba batacuda music.

Michael McGoldrick Group (UK/Ireland): cutting edge Celtic music, joined by famed Irish musician Sharon Shannon.

The African Showboyz (Ghana): unique blend of tribal African drumming, dance and fire eating.

#### **Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

The Saltwater Band (Australia): entertaining traditional and contemporary musicians from remote Elcho Island.

#### **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March**

The Dream Engine (UK): sensational aerialists performing their stunning aerial act, *Conedancers*.

Te Vaka, (NZ) unique 12 piece musical group with costumes and dances of the South Pacific.

### **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March,**

Big Rory (Scotland): amazing roving stilt act.

Further program information [www.bendigo2006.com.au](http://www.bendigo2006.com.au) or [www.melbourne2006.com.au](http://www.melbourne2006.com.au)

## **Geelong**

Geelong's Steampacket Gardens will be jam packed with a program of music, theatre, sports, circus and street theatre, and Andrew Rogers will create one of his highly complex and world-famous Geoglyphs, massive land art works constructed with local materials, at a nearby location.

Geelong's own highly acclaimed Back to Back Theatre company, whose core ensemble is made up of people considered as having intellectual disabilities, will join forces with puppeteers the Snuff Puppets to entertain visitors to the Geelong Commonwealth Games live-site. And Sheepish, a roving performance from young emerging young actors from Geelong profiling the athletic, creative and intellectual abilities of the much-maligned sheep, will also be a feature.

### **Highlights:**

#### **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March**

The Dream Engine (UK): sensational aerialists performing their stunning act, *Heliosphere*.

#### **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March**

La Bottine Souriante (Canada): unique musicians presenting folk, salsa and jazz from the Quebecois musical heritage.

#### **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March**

Pop Eyed (Australia): extraordinarily skilled acrobats .

La Judith (Australia): solo performance in hula hoop, contortion, magic, dance, ballet.

Icarus (Australia): amazing stilt walker performers

Afro Jambo Acrobats (Kenya): amazing performers in limbo dance, hoop jumping, rope skipping, fire eating, African dance and human pyramids.

#### **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March**

Tongan Royal Corps of Musicians: 50 piece marching band – who dazzle with their antics.

The Chipolatas (UK): vibrant circus, music and street theatre ensemble.

Tutti Frutti (Australia): contemporary circus company, physical comedy.

The African Showboyz (Ghana): unique blend of tribal African drumming, dance and fire eating.

#### **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March**

Strange Fruit (Australia): amazing performers combine dance, music and spectacle on four metre high poles in the air.

ERTH (Australia): leading innovators of Australian physical and visual theatre.

The Dream Engine (UK): sensational aerialists performing their stunning act, *Conedancers*.

#### **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March**

Strike (NZ): Percussionists get together with the local community to present a stunning final concert before the Closing Ceremony on the screen.

## **Moe**

Gippland's live-site will be located at the Moe Racing Club and celebrated with a battle of the bands, a country music night, a big opening night ceremony with fireworks, and a range of international performances.

Y Space, a performing arts company from Natimuk that works with rock climbers and dancers in unusual and high places, will deliver a community art project at Powerworks in Morwell. The event will see aerial performance, live animation, puppetry, sculpture and dance juxtaposed against a backdrop of Morwell's famous coal production site.

### **Highlights:**

#### **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March**

Opening Ceremony, showcasing Coal Valley Choir, Latrobe's Male Choir singing alongside the Melbourne Welsh Choir. Conclusion with fireworks