

# Media Release

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## CAST AUDITIONS BEGIN FOR GAMES CEREMONIES

Auditions for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games have begun in Melbourne in what is to be the biggest event ever staged in Victoria.

The Games Ceremonies team will audition thousands of 'hopeful' cast members following an overwhelming response to the call for nominations from every Australian state and territory.

It is however not too late to audition, applications are still open and Australians interested in being a cast member for the Opening or Closing Ceremonies can apply online at [www.melbourne2006.com.au](http://www.melbourne2006.com.au) or call 1300 00 2006 for a paper based application form.

In addition to this week's audition process, the Games Ceremonies team will be seeking a specialist cast of those under 18 years for certain roles in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and will be contacting relevant groups when needed for specific talent.

Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Chairman, Mr Ronald J Walker, said he was impressed with the amount of people from varying performance backgrounds who have applied to be cast members for the Games Ceremonies.

"We are delighted with the response to the public call for cast members. The overwhelming enthusiasm Australians have for the arts is demonstrated by how many people have signed up to be a part of the biggest event ever staged in Victoria," said Mr Walker.

The Federal Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp, officially launched the call for nominations earlier this year saying the ceremonies provided a once in a lifetime opportunity for people to be involved in the Commonwealth Games.

"The Ceremonies are destined to be exciting events as the MCG comes to life with thousands of performers, athletes and spectators all gathering in one of the world's great stadiums to celebrate the special relationship enjoyed by Commonwealth nations and territories in one of the world's great sporting and cultural cities," Senator Kemp said.

"Victoria will be centre of the world stage come March 2006 and I am sure Australia's cultural and artistic talent will shine."

The Australian Government is providing \$40 million towards the Ceremonies Program as part of its overall contribution of more than \$280 million for the Games.

Victorian Premier Steve Bracks said all cast members would be seen as ambassadors for Victoria and Australia.

"Both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Games will showcase our finest and most talented performers," Mr Bracks said.

"Victoria has a long history of producing the finest performing artists in Australia and we are delighted with the response to the call for performers to help us stage Victoria's best sporting and cultural event in March 2006."

All cast auditions will take place in Melbourne on the evenings of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday until Sunday 28 August. Over 300 people will be auditioned on the first day, with six sessions being scheduled from 5pm-9.45pm. During the weekend sessions approximately 700 people are expected to audition per day in sessions from 10am-8.45pm.

Assessments will take place in the form of group auditions only and applicants should allow at least three hours for the audition and registration process. Loose comfortable clothing is advised and there is no need for costumes or make-up. Applicants can expect to be assessed on attributes such as ability, energy, attitude and co-ordination.

The future timeline for the Ceremonies audition and rehearsal process is as follows:

- September 2005 - final assignment of cast roles in Opening or Closing Ceremonies.
- October 2005 – all successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified.
- January-March 2006 – rehearsals.
- 15 March 2006 – Opening Ceremony.
- 26 March 2006 – Closing Ceremony.

Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games cast rehearsals will number approximately three to four rehearsals per week during January, February and March 2006. Each rehearsal will be a minimum of three hours in duration.

Organisers said while the call for Ceremonies cast members was national, those applying from outside Melbourne are required in Melbourne for auditions at their own expense, and would need to demonstrate their place of residence during the rehearsals period was within one hour's travel from Melbourne.

The Official Sponsor of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Ceremonies Program is the National Australia Bank (NAB).

“The National Australia Bank is committed to supporting the communities in which we operate and this is reflected in our sponsorship of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Ceremonies and Athletics programs,” said NAB’s Chief Executive John Stewart.

**For further information on the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games please go to [www.melbourne2006.com.au](http://www.melbourne2006.com.au) or contact:**

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