

Thursday 23 February 2006

GAMES FESTIVAL OPENS WITH LAUNCH OF MAJOR EXHIBITION

Festival Melbourne2006, the cultural festival of the 2006 Commonwealth Games, was formally opened today by the Minister for the Commonwealth Games, Justin Madden and Federal Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp.

The streets of Melbourne and regional Victoria will host Australia's biggest ever festival of arts and culture as part of the 2006 Commonwealth Games celebrations.

The \$12 million Australian and Victorian Government funded *Festival Melbourne2006* brings together artists and performers from across Australia and the Commonwealth for a celebration of contemporary music, dance, exhibitions, circus, street theatre and a youth program.

Mr Madden declared the Festival open at the launch of flagship Festival exhibition, *2006 Contemporary Commonwealth*, featuring 22 artists from across the Commonwealth and Australia. The exhibition, at NGV Australia and the Australian Centre for the Moving Image at Federation Square, was formally launched by Senator Kemp.

"Festival Melbourne2006 will be fresh, exciting and contemporary, putting the world's best performers and artists alongside the world's best athletes," Mr Madden said.

"The vibrancy and diversity of the festival will highlight Melbourne as one of the world's truly cosmopolitan cities, strengthening Victoria's reputation as both an arts and sporting capital.

"Events will be free during Games time and open to all members of the public."

Senator Kemp said the exhibition, *2006 Contemporary Commonwealth*, will explore global culture in the 21st century through the work of 11 international Commonwealth artists and 11 Australian artists. *United by the Moment* - the theme of the Games - is at the heart of the exhibition.

"Festival Melbourne2006 encompasses three artistic programs: performing arts, exhibitions and a spectacular youth program," Senator Kemp said.

"The performing arts program will offer an exciting range of acts including circus, street performance, dance, music and acrobatics, featuring 2,000 artists from 120 performing companies providing more than 500 performances.

"The exhibitions program will include photography, installations, Indigenous carving, textiles and moving image. The youth program, delivered by Next Wave, will offer a colourful program of dance, music, community art projects, street theatre and visual arts made for, by and with young people." Senator Kemp said.

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Media contact:

**Brent Hooley 9651 5799 or 0407 138 680 www.vic.gov.au
Michael Christo 9650 7274 or 0409 040276**

Many of the Festival locations will also be 'live sites', hubs of festival events and performances which also broadcast live coverage of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and competition events.

Victorian Arts Minister, Mary Delahunty, said metropolitan live sites would be located at Alexandra Gardens, Melbourne Museum, Docklands, Queensbridge Square, Federation Square and South Beach Reserve, St Kilda.

Regional live sites will also be located in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Moe.

"A range of festival activities will also take place in Melbourne's renowned cultural venues and precincts from inner city laneways to the leading arts institutions," Ms Delahunty said.

"These locations include the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, the National Gallery of Victoria, RMIT Gallery, Bourke St Mall and the Arts Centre forecourt."

Festival Melbourne2006 has now started in the lead up to the Games with the exhibition program opening in venues across Melbourne. The performance and youth programs of the Festival will open at the commencement of the Games on 15th March.

For more information on *Festival Melbourne2006* visit www.melbourne2006.com.au or call the Commonwealth Games Information Line on 1300 00 2006

Festival Melbourne 2006 Key venues and live sites

- **Melbourne Museum** – live site, exhibitions and the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival
- **Queensbridge Square**, Southbank Promenade – live site
- **National Gallery of Victoria** – exhibitions and outdoor aerial performances
- **CBD** – roving entertainers, exhibitions in Flinders Lane Galleries.
- **Sidney Myer Music Bowl** – free music and performances, all at 7.30 pm
 - Jimmy Cliff, reggae legend – 16 March
 - Miriam Makeba, Africa's foremost star – 17 March
 - Evelyn Glennie, top world percussionist with MSO- 18 March
 - All Star World Percussion Spectacular – 19 March
 - Alkinoos Ioannidis, Greek Superstar – 20 March
 - Random Dance, Nemesis – 21 March
 - Sounds of the Pacific – 23 March
 - Australian Defence Force Band – Top Brass – 24 March
 - Bollywood at the Bowl – 25 March
- **Federation Square** – live site, dancing, music, Indigenous showcase and more
- **State Library of Victoria** – Commonwealth Writer's Prize
- **Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI)** – film festival and collaborative exhibition with the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV Australia, Federation Square)
- **National Gallery of Victoria (St Kilda Rd)**- visual arts
- **Bourke Street Mall** – street theatre and performances
- **Docklands** – youth festival activities and Waterfront City live site
- **Alexandra Gardens** – live site, circus aerial performances, music and more
- **Immigration Museum** – Commonwealth Photographic Award exhibitions
- **RMIT** – textile exhibitions
- **St Kilda** – South Beach Reserve live site.

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