

Tuesday July 6, 2004

MAJOR CULTURAL BOOST TO CELEBRATE THE 2006 GAMES

Melbourne's arts calendar will receive a massive boost as part of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, with a \$12 million Cultural Program to start in the weeks leading up to the Opening Ceremony.

The Premier Steve Bracks said an array of free and low-cost arts events would continue through the 11 days of competition to celebrate the different cultures brought together by the Games.

"For Melbourne, hosting the Commonwealth Games is the culmination of three great loves – sport, art and diversity," Mr Bracks said.

"The Games cultural program will help bring these passions together, with a mix of contemporary music, dance, exhibition and circus that aims to offer something for everyone.

"To encourage Victorians to represent themselves in this festival, artists from across the Commonwealth will work with artists, local choirs, dancers and other community groups in putting together activities and performances."

Federal Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp, said the Australian Government was proud to be involved with this important program as part of its support of the Commonwealth Games.

"The Cultural Program provides a wonderful opportunity to involve a great many individuals and organizations from the cultural sector and showcase the diversity of Australian culture and arts to the rest of the Commonwealth," Senator Kemp said.

The Program, jointly funded by the Victorian and Federal Governments, will be delivered with the assistance of two leading Australian arts companies. Global Art Projects will coordinate exhibitions and Arts Projects Australia will coordinate performing arts events.

The Minister for the Commonwealth Games, Sport and Recreation, Justin Madden said the companies chosen had a track record of delivering high-quality, innovative cultural programs in Australia and overseas.

"Arts Projects Australia has been a driving force behind some of the nation's most prominent festivals, including Moomba, the Australia Council's Performing Arts Market, and WOMAdelaide," he said.

"Director of Arts Projects Australia, Ian Scobie, was a consultant producer to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Arts Festival. Executive producer, Andrew Bleby, has worked with the National Institute for Circus Arts and the Adelaide Festival Centre.

.../2

Page 2

“Similarly, Global Art Projects successfully managed exhibitions for the Australia Council at the Venice Biennale of Art, and an element of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Arts festival.

“Directors Lisa Warrener, Donald Williams and Michael McMahon, have long established careers in visual arts management, exhibition development and education.”

Chairman of Melbourne 2006, Ron Walker, said the cultural program would be a chance to showcase the 71 Commonwealth nations in a unique celebration.

“With the artistic dimension of major events becoming more important, the Games-time cultural program will strengthen Victoria’s reputation as both an arts and sporting capital,” Mr Walker said.

Both companies will work with the Office of Commonwealth Games Coordination and the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Corporation to create events that are in-synch with other Games celebrations.

Mr Madden said leading arts identity, Sue Natrass, would chair a working group that would help to coordinate the overall direction of the cultural program. This group would also include representatives from the City of Melbourne, Australian Government, Arts Victoria and the Australian Commonwealth Games Association.

Victorians are invited to register for updates on the cultural program and to find out how their community can get involved in Commonwealth Games celebrations by visiting www.dvc.vic.gov.au/commonwealth_games or telephoning (03) 9655 2006.

The XVIII Commonwealth Games will be held from 15-26 March 2006.