



**MEDIA INFORMATION**

**Wednesday 6 August 2008**

## **FESTIVAL CAIRNS 2008 - A 25 DAY, 47 EVENT 'LOVE-IN' FOR CAIRNS & ITS ENVIRONMENT**

In its seventh year, Festival Cairns 2008 promises the city and its growing community - a 25 day program of 47 events spanning music, art, sport, culture and entertainment.

Event partners, supporters and friends of Festival Cairns gathered this morning to celebrate the unveiling of this year's official program that will kick off in just three weeks on Wednesday 27 August with 100 Years of Australian Rugby League at Barlow Park.

Signified by a high energy blend of dancing girls, painted models and giant lollipops, the launch gathering served to create anticipation among guests for Festival Cairns and its imminent roll out - promising 'something for everyone'.

In her first year as Mayor of Cairns Regional Council, Councillor Val Schier was on hand to perform the official launch of an event she described as evolving from humble beginnings in 2002 to providing one of the best festival months on the east coast of Australia.

"Festival Cairns is a special celebration of who we are our culture, our lifestyle and our multicultural diversity; especially in relation to the traditional owners of the land, who enrich this major festival through pro-active participation.

"With each year the festival encompasses a growing number of community-based activities right through to high-profile events such as Cairns Amateurs and extremely popular Parade of Lights.

"This gives potential visitors to our region another reason to consider visiting - quite separate to our natural attractions. It also gives locals a sense of pride, excitement and an appreciation of the enormous amount of talent in our midst," said Councillor Schier.

Now in her third year in the role overseeing what has become Queensland's largest community event, Festival Cairns operations manager, Narell Black took pleasure in unveiling this year's official program.

"Along with our traditional favourites, this year's highlight would have to be **Ergon Energy's Busking Festival**. Incorporating an Amateur Competition and culminating in a three day showcase of international performers, the aim of this event is to bring the city streets alive. Over the duration of Festival Cairns, locals and visitors will feast on a program of live entertainment on the Esplanade and in City Place.

"We invite the community to embrace this initiative through audience participation in the hope that this will become an annual fixture and major draw card generating notoriety and visitors to Cairns," she said.

In 2008, Festival Cairns theme has been expanded from Love Cairns introduced last year to include Love the Environment.

**12FC Festival Cairns Official Program Launch 6 August 08 PR**

“The reason for this is that to love Cairns, you need to love where you live. It really is a tropical paradise that has more strings to its bow than just its natural attractions. The people, the culture, the way of life - it’s the whole package. In addition to our second **Dress Up Your Business** Campaign, this year we are directing our attention to the region’s bounty of produce and through events such as **Food, Wine and All That Jazz** and newly created, **Harbourlights Wine and Dine Lunch**, we will showcase the region’s primary production and plethora of ingredients available for everyone to enjoy,” she said.

Mrs Black also remarked on the support and involvement by local art and entertainment venues which had specifically created a program of events for this year’s program.

“Festival Cairns would not be half the event it is today without the entertainment programs of The Tanks Art Centre and Cairns Civic Theatre along with Cairns Regional Gallery, CoCA and Cairns Libraries.

“From kids and families to music and adult entertainment, we have The Tanks to thank for a performing arts feast of some 11 high calibre events including **Ben Winkelman Trio, Jeff Lang, Dave Graney and Clare Moore, Carnival on Collins, Australian Poetry Slam 08, Kooky Cabaret, The Super Kids Circus Show and The Audreys and Palua Sooksook.**

“Cairns Civic Theatre’s program is just as prolific, albeit with a more classical twist. Events feature **Cairns Choral Society’s 2008 Gala Spectacular, Winner of the Sydney International Piano Competition, The Queensland Orchestra Kinetic Energy, Possum Magic - The Musical Live on Stage, Consentino’s Threshold, Ensembles, Arias and Pipe Organ, Big Band Spectacular and Cairns Concert Orchestra - A Night of Classical Music.** This venue also presents Cairns’ biggest dance battle, **Stomp the Nard** at the Esplanade Skate Park,” she said.

While some may judge the success of Festival Cairns on its higher profile ticketed events Narell Black says there is a lot to be said for the amount of free and family oriented activities.

“In the past few years we have focused on building our free, family oriented entertainment program. I believe we truly deliver on this front with a long line -up of events such as **Ergon Energy’s Busking Festival, Family Fun at the Pier and Schools Cultural Week, United - Youth Concert, Birch Carroll and Coyle’s Pictures in the Park, Carnival on Collins, BDO Kendalls Swing by the Lagoon, World’s Greatest Grill** and finale favourites, **Rotary Duck Events, Tropical Wave Festival, RACQ Insurance Parade of Lights and Cairns Ports Explosion of Lights.**”

While there are too many music events to mention, this genre is very well represented. In addition to events already mentioned at The Tanks and Cairns Civic Theatre, the community can look forward to a second **TimeOUT Concert** on Saturday 30 August bringing New Zealand hip-hop star, Scribe to share the bill with two of Australia’s hottest young rock bands, Faker and Kisschasy as well as reggae/roots act Blue King Brown who performed at last year’s **Reggaetown Festival** at Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park. This event returns again in 2008 on Saturday 6 September with New Zealand’s stand out Reggae ambassadors, Katchafire, the Mana Maori Music Men as headline act. Also worth putting in the diary is Couch Music Search at Blue Sky Brewery on Wednesday 17 September that will showcase the live music scene in Cairns with the plan to uncover emerging local artists, singer-songwriters, instrumentalists and bands.

In a final note, Mrs Black introduced the concept of sport being a vital part of the region’s cultural make up.

“Unlike many other festivals in Australia today, Festival Cairns has a large dose of sport. In the first five days of our program, sport lovers can get stuck in with **100 Years Australian Rugby**

League, Queensland Cup Basketball Tournament and Festival of Sport. And with events like Subway Hoops Clinic, Festival Cairns Cup (yacht race), 2008 Red Centre to Gold Coast Trial (rally cars) and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cairns Amateurs Spring Racing Carnival in between, the strong sporting presence is continued right throughout the program to finale day with Reef Hotel Casino Masters Rugby Tournament,” she said.

Festival Cairns gratefully acknowledges the support of its partners. These are headed up by foundation sponsors, Presenting Partner, Pacific Toyota and Government Partner, Cairns Regional Council. Major Partners include Cairns Ports, Cairns Family Medical Centre, The Pier at the Marina, BDO Kendalls, RACQ Insurance and Ergon Energy. Festival Partners include Harboursights, Shangri-La Hotel, Foster’s Group, Piccones Supa IGA and Birch Carroll and Coyle. For a full list of Festival Members and Media Partners, consult the official program or website.

Festival Cairns 2008 will run from Wednesday 27 August to Saturday 20 September, 2008.

For further information about Festival Cairns 2008, click on [www.festivalcairns.com.au](http://www.festivalcairns.com.au) or contact management company, Events Cairns on tel: 07 4051 0222 / email: [info@eventscairns.com](mailto:info@eventscairns.com)

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