

20th Melbourne International Comedy Festival

GOLD FOR THE 20TH MELBOURNE COMEDY FESTIVAL!

In a record-breaking frenzy reminiscent of Aussie swimmers at the Commonwealth Games, the 20th Melbourne Comedy Festival has scored an impressive array of record breaking statistics, consolidating its position as Australia's largest cultural event.

Festival Director Susan Provan said "the Festival smashed all previous box office records by collecting \$7.6million in ticket sales, while keeping a fabulously affordable average ticket price of only \$22."

More than 415,000 people attended Comedy Festival events – outstripping attendances at Melbourne Cup Carnival, the Melbourne Grand Prix and the Montreal Just for Laughs Festival. Melbourne is now the second largest comedy festival in the world, surpassed only by the Edinburgh behemoth.

The Comedy Festival continues to be an event with something for everyone. Victorians and interstate and overseas visitors were able to choose from an incredible 230 shows with more than 3,200 performance sessions, featuring everything from Men Of Steel's kitchen utensil puppetry, to the hardcore stand-up marathon of the all-night Festival Club sleepover. If you couldn't find something to chuckle at, you weren't in Melbourne. (And all those visitors, we should mention, generated economic benefits to Melbourne to the tune of \$52 million).

And, for national Comedy fans who couldn't get to Melbourne this year....

Raw Comedy and Class Clowns heats were held in every Australian capital city and lots of regional centres.

1.7 million Australians watched the opening night Gala on Network Ten and 32,000 Raw Comedy fans downloaded our Raw pod casts (keeping it in the iTunes Top Ten for weeks!). 259,000 visitors had fun with our website.

Since the Festival finished in May, the Roadshow has toured to packed houses nationally in over 95 regional and interstate arts centres from Port Hedland to Roxby Downs, Darwin, Mt Isa and even Wycheproof.

Ms Provan said "we're mighty pleased that our years of planning to develop strategies to make sure Australians remembered the Comedy Festival was coming straight after the Commonwealth Games has paid off. Australian performers are the backbone and big stars of the Festival so it's important they are supported".

And our comedians said.....

Judith Lucy: "The Melbourne International Comedy Festival has always been extremely kind to me. I can honestly say that having a successful show in this latest festival, when I seriously felt my career was in a shit hole, prevented me from taking my own life - well, it stopped me from doing 'It Takes Two'."

Tim Minchin : "The Comedy Festival provided me with an amazing opportunity to refine my work and expose it to important members of the industry. Without MICF 04, I would never have built the confidence to create Dark Side for MICF 05, without which I would not have gone to the Edinburgh Fringe, won a fancy-pants award, got an ace manager, and played after Mariah Carey. Mariah goddamn Carey, no less! Thank you MICF, you're like a Stairmaster for the glutes of comedy, and I now have buns of steel."

Corinne Grant (The Glasshouse): "I have been performing in the Melbourne Comedy Festival since the early nineties. It is where I met those that I have gone on to collaborate with on many different projects, including those that have led to my current television career. In short, I wouldn't be where I am now without the experience and opportunity that the MICF afforded me."

Colin Lane (Lano & Woodley) : "The Comedy Festival has been a fantastic festival for Lano & Woodley and Melbourne in many ways. We always played to packed houses and had the opportunity to interact with comedy artists from all 'round the world to discuss creative and business issues. Also it is a brilliant festival in bringing thousands of people into the city and joining together in a month of much needed laughter and community".

