



**MEDIA RELEASE - THURSDAY 12 JULY**

## **COMEDY FESTIVAL HAS A DAMN GOOD LAUGH**

Proving once again that a good sense of humour beats a pair of aces every time, the Melbourne International Comedy Festival today announced **\$9,231,011.91** in box office for the recent 2007 Festival, an **increase of 20%** on last year's record breaking Festival.

With a total attendance of over **483,000**, and paid attendance in excess of 400,000, the Festival consolidated its position as Australia's largest cultural event, surpassing attendances at the Melbourne Cup Carnival, the Melbourne Grand Prix and the entire national audience for the Big Day Out. Free events attracted **83,000** people.

The Festival got clever with computers and had **549,771** visits to its website from February to May, including a staggering **4,345,377** page views. Getting even more clever with technology, internet sales for the 2007 Festival were up to **154,740** tickets (worth **\$3.8m**) from last year's 117,382 (\$2.6m).

Festival Director Susan Provan said: "Horses, swimming and cars clearly can't compete with a good laugh. Crowds flooded to this year's Festival and truly injected the city with a sense of fun and camaraderie.

"The Festival hosted big stars, launched exciting newcomers and celebrated everything in between. From Fed Square, Melbourne Town Hall, the glamorous Regent Theatre to pubs and clubs, city venues were consumed by comedy for the month of April."

**91,885** interstate and international visitors attended the Festival, making up **19% of the 2007 audience** – an **increase of 4%** on 2006.

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. The inaugural indigenous comedy competition, **Deadly Funny** was a huge hit and will return in an expanded form in 2008. **1.2million** people around Australia watched the **2007 Melbourne Comedy Festival Gala** on Network Ten.

Since the Festival finished in May, the **Comedy Roadshow** has toured to packed houses nationally in over 95 regional and interstate arts centres around Australia.

In the **Funny Tonne** competition to see the most shows in this year's Festival, Nathaniel Scott and Sam Stafford / Caitlin Crowley tied on 115 shows each.

For lovers of numbers, there were **281** shows, with **4,114** performances, by **1,902** performers, helped by **1,329** support staff. The average ticket price was **\$23.08**. Yes, damn cheap.

**The 2008 Melbourne Comedy Festival runs from 19 March – 13 April 2008.**

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