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## 2009 MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES RECORD ATTENDANCES

The Melbourne International Comedy Festival today announced record attendances for the 2009 Festival, after working hard to keep tickets prices low and accessible for audiences - the average ticket price remained under \$24.

With a total attendance of over **490,000** – up nearly **10%** on 2008, and paid attendance of **more than 420,000**, the Festival proved that it is much loved by Melbourne audiences, as well as interstate and international guests. It remains one of the biggest events in Melbourne, pipped only by the Australian Open, the AFL Grand Final and the Spring Racing Carnival.

Melbourne Comedy Festival Director, Susan Provan said: “The 2009 results reinforce the fact that the Melbourne Comedy Festival is a major event for Victoria and Australia, and a vital artistic showcase for hundreds of comedy performers.

“It’s a Festival with an Australia-wide and global reach, drawing producers, agents and performers from around the world to discover Australian artists, while local audiences enjoy the best contemporary comedy from overseas and across the nation.”

For lovers of numbers, there were **318** shows, with **4,560** performances, in **123** venues.

The 2009 Festival recorded **\$10,539,850** in box office. Despite production, venue and staff costs having risen, the Festival has registered a modest surplus.

“We work hard to maintain an accessible ticket price,” said Susan Provan, “so that the broadest audience possible can enjoy a program ranging from the presentation of big stars to the launching of newcomers.”

And comedy lovers unable to get to Melbourne were not left out - **Raw Comedy** heats were held in every Australian capital city and lots of regional centres. The indigenous comedy competition, **Deadly Funny** was expanded to encompass Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. And over **1 million** people around Australia watched the **Melbourne Comedy Festival Gala** on Network Ten, as well as Comedy Festival editions of **Good News Week** on Network Ten.

The Festival is currently showing off the best of Australian and international comedians across Australia, on **The Comedy Festival Roadshow**.

**The 2010 Melbourne Comedy Festival runs from 24 March – 18 April.**

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