



FESTIVAL OPENS WITH HUGE SUCCESS

The Castlemaine State Festival exploded in a flurry of energy and excitement over the weekend. Over 2000 people filled Lyttleton St in central Castlemaine on Friday evening to celebrate the opening night extravaganza *Cornucopia!* a feast of colour and song. The evening continued with other amazing opening night performances including *The Black Diamonds*, *Chants des Catacombes* and *Wulamanyuwi*.

On the Saturday and Sunday, in the leafy surrounds of Castlemaine's Victory Park, *The Grove* was filled with people enjoying the abundance of fresh regional market produce while exploring the fertile intersections between art, food and sustainability. The Castlemaine Farmers' Market, for example, proved hugely popular, *Garden Chef* was an exciting green cook off and the table at the *Long Table Feast* was, indeed, long!

A plethora of talented local and national visual artists also opened their exhibits to the public at multiple venues, ranging from the Visual Arts Biennial launched by **NGV director Tony Elwood** at Periscope to open studios and art walks all across the region.

In fact, the success of the opening weekend of the 2013 Festival far outweighs all previous Festivals with **an estimated 10-15,000 visitors** enjoying what Castlemaine had to offer, and 65% of the Festival events have sold out, with many more selling fast.

Festival Director Martin Paten said "it is wonderful to have opened the Festival. Castlemaine is certainly full of people and lots of activity. I hope that everyone can find something that they can experience during the upcoming week."

For the rest of the festival highlights that should not be missed include: the beautiful and theatrical *The Man Who Planted Trees*, a modern day tale of caution wrapped in the hilarity of a puppet show, a performance to be enjoyed by young and old; John Stanton's stunning performance of the Shakespeare-esque *And When He Falls*; the innovative musical agitators, *The Raah Project*, who blend concepts of jazz, electronic, hip hop, dance and soul music; the exquisite *Streeton Trio*, whose chamber music is internationally acclaimed; or the incredible line up of talented writers that make up the *Our Collective DNA* literature program.

Other free events on the final weekend that should not to be missed: the remarkable dance piece all the way from Spain "Entomo", an insect dance created and performed by two dances from Madrid: Elías Aguirre and Alvaro Esteban; as well as the fantastic collaboration between Castlemaine Secondary College, Vossloh Cogifer Australia and Belgium's Time Circus called *Raildomino* – which will be a public installation for audiences to view down at the Vossloh site.

Full details and box office online www.castlemainefestival.com.au