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# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Mardi Gras to remain World's Number One after New Deal**

Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras will reinforce its position as the world's leading gay and lesbian festival after securing a significant investment from Events NSW.

Events NSW Chief Executive Geoff Parmenter said he was looking forward to working with the organisers New Mardi Gras to drive a strategic agenda of consolidation and growth, with the common goal of positioning the event as the world's premier gay and lesbian festival, and a major economic benefit driver for Sydney.

"Events NSW have a real interest in ensuring this iconic event continues to thrive with an enduring and sustainable business model. Our investment is directed specifically to the development of that platform.

"From humble beginnings the Mardi Gras, particularly the street parade, has evolved into one of the biggest events on the Australian events calendar.

"It has been estimated that the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras generates more than \$30 million of direct economic benefit for New South Wales each year, and it has become an international showcase of Sydney's diversity.

"In support of the agreement we will develop national and international marketing strategies in conjunction with Tourism New South Wales to ensure tourism visitation is maximised," Mr Parmenter said.

New Mardi Gras Chair David Imrie said the not for profit, volunteer-based organisation was very excited about working with Events NSW and the opportunities it would provide to build on the success of the event and to make it the best festival of its kind in the world.

"Parade, Fair Day and an enhanced arts and cultural festival will be pillars of a new, self-sustaining, creative approach focused on improving participation, content and production values," Mr Imrie said.

The strategy aims for:

- more international and national float participation
- integration with the domestic and international marketing strategies of Tourism NSW
- securing existing and new media broadcasting opportunities.

New Mardi Gras Chief Executive Officer Anna McInerney said over the past 30 years, Mardi Gras had become one of Sydney's best known and hallmark events attracting both interstate and international visitors.



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“It’s time to drive even greater national and international recognition of Mardi Gras and its vibrant, energetic expression of our Aussie larrikin personality,” Ms McInerney said.

“The envy of other global cities, this unique, Australian tradition has endeared its way into the heart of the city and continues to deliver economic and marketing returns for New South Wales.”

Mardi Gras was voted by Condé Nast as one of the world’s top ten costume parades. Planet Out named it as the best gay event in the world. It remains the one truly famous global gay and lesbian annual event and an attractive escape from the northern hemisphere winter.

**For more information, interviews or images please contact:**

Anna McInerney  
New Mardi Gras  
Ph: (02) 9568 8600/0410 485 568  
Email: [anna.mcinerney@mardigras.org.au](mailto:anna.mcinerney@mardigras.org.au)

David Mulally  
New Mardi Gras  
Ph: 0422 974080  
Email: [communications@mardigras.org.au](mailto:communications@mardigras.org.au)

Kate Pembroke  
Events NSW  
Ph: 0408 486 404  
Email: [kate.pembroke@eventsnsw.com.au](mailto:kate.pembroke@eventsnsw.com.au)