



MEDIA RELEASE

18 MAY 2009

EMBARGOED UNTIL 5PM 18th MAY 2009

MARDI GRAS UNVEILS PLANS FOR A HISTORIC SEASON IN 2010

New Mardi Gras (NMG) today announced exciting news about the 2010 Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, including a move to a two-week format, running Parade and Party on separate weekends and its 2010 Season theme *Mardi Gras' History of the World*.

In a move designed to make Mardi Gras an even more attractive event in the calendar of Sydneysiders and the world's gay travelers, NMG plans a more concentrated two-week festival, curated in tandem with its many arts partners.

The two weeks will be punctuated by three major events – Launch at Fair Day, Parade and Party – held on three successive weekends to create a sustained buzz over the entire Mardi Gras period.

Launch/Fair Day	21 st February
Parade	27 th February
Harbour '10	28 th February
Party	6 th March

The Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras 2010 will launch officially at Fair Day on Sunday 21st February in Victoria Park, building on the success of 2009's event.

This will kick off two high-octane weeks of events and celebration right across the city, building on the success of this year's Festival which saw artists such as Alan Cumming, Tina Arena, Roberta Flack and Joan Rivers coming to Sydney to perform.

Mardi Gras Parade will take place on the night of Saturday February 27th along its familiar route in Darlinghurst. A major post-Parade event has been planned for that night and will be announced in the coming months.

On the following day, 28th February, the Mardi Gras harbour party, Harbour '10, will once again take place at the Royal Botanical Gardens, providing the perfect recovery after Parade night.

In the final week between Parade and Party, NMG will deliver a day and night social and arts program - by the beach, in galleries, in theatres and around the city – that will be unmatched anywhere in the world. NMG's aim is to encourage locals as well as visitors to take time off work to enjoy as much as possible of the amazing festival taking place on their doorstep.

Mardi Gras Party will officially close the Season on 6th March 2009 with its usual array of stars, big shows and high production values. NMG has consistently taken the party up a notch over the last few years and intends to do so again in 2010.

NMG also announced the 2010 Season theme, *Mardi Gras' History of the World*, an exploration of gay people's stories through the ages and a queer take on some of the great moments and figures of history.

Events such as Mardi Gras Party, Harbour '10 and Fair Day will all be themed to evoke particular times and places. Fair Day, for example, will bring to life a medieval fair, including stocks, dunking chairs, jousting, codpieces and spit roasts.

The 2010 Parade will be an opportunity to honour our GLBTIQ heroes, key events in their history and to focus our usual camp, sexy and irreverent lens on those people and events that capture our imagination.

A number of NMG spokespeople commented today on key aspects of today's announcement.

David Imrie, NMG Chair, on Mardi Gras' evolution:

“2009 was always going to be a pivotal year for us after the thirtieth anniversary in 2008. A lot of people felt that we would inevitably have to scale things back, but in fact we kept up our momentum. We got back on TV, secured state government funding, grew the Parade, brought in bigger acts, with Joan Rivers and Paul Oakenfold and certainly got more media attention. In 2010 we will continue this growth with a punchier format, delivering two weeks of stunning arts and entertainment.”

“Mardi Gras has already evolved out of all recognition from the 1978 march to become a major arts festival, party promoter and world-famous event. This would not have been possible without flexibility and creativity in how we program. A good example was the move to a summer parade. If that hadn't happened the event would never have grown to the stature it has.”

Danielle Harvey, Festival Executive Producer, on the 2-week season:

“A review of major arts festivals around the world showed they were typically two week festivals. By moving to two weeks we will be able to create a much more impactful experience for both local and international audiences.”

Anna McInerney, NMG CEO, on separating Parade and Party:

“We’ve looked at how other major festival-type events are produced around the world and one of the clear lessons is that they run as a series of parties. Rio and New Orleans are not just a single parade - though they have that as their core. They encompass many small parades and parties and go on for days. That is what we want to bring to Sydney at Mardi Gras and in particular that final week.”

Anna McInerney, NMG CEO, on the 2010 Season theme:

“Mardi Gras Parade is about celebration, but it also has a political dimension. It’s important that the themes we choose can support both these elements. *Mardi Gras’ History of the World* will of course be a very tongue-in-cheek and colourful exploration of the past, but it will also find room for us to honour some great people and mark things that we as a community need to remember, like Stonewall or the pink triangle victims of the Nazi concentration camps.”

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