

Media Release

The Hon Danny Pearson MP

Assistant Treasurer

Minister for Regulatory Reform

Minister for Government Services

Minister for Creative Industries

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MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL IS BACK

Victorians can look forward to a barrel of laughs and side-splitting entertainment with the return of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival in 2021.

Minister for the Creative Industries Danny Pearson today launched the festival, which will run a program of more than 350 in-person and online events from 24 March to 18 April 2021.

Globally recognised as one of the biggest comedy festivals in the world, Melbourne International Comedy Festival has brought together a program set to reconnect audiences with their favourite acts.

Local talent is the focus this year with an impressive bill of much-loved Australian comedians, including Fiona O'Loughlin, Geraldine Hickey, Lano & Woodley, Zoë Coombs Marr, Aaron Chen and Wil Anderson. International-turned-locals Ross Noble and Arj Barker are also on the roster.

Festival shows will take place in venues around Melbourne and beyond through a dedicated touring component, with a bigger than ever digital program starring international guests to complement physical activities.

The festival has worked closely with the Victorian Government to develop a COVIDSafe Event Plan to keep festival performers, workers and audiences safe.

The Andrews Labor Government is a long-standing supporter of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, and over the past year, has provided additional funding to help the festival to respond to the impacts of the pandemic, continue to provide opportunities for artists and plan a COVIDSafe program.

Most recently, the festival is one of 16 arts organisations to share in more than \$4 million to stage live COVIDSafe events and performances.

Other recipients include Castlemaine State Festival, which is now on, and the forthcoming Midsumma Festival.

For program details visit comedyfestival.com.au/2021.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Danny Pearson

"Melbourne International Comedy Festival is one of the biggest, brightest and most beloved events of Victoria's calendar, and I couldn't be happier to welcome it back."

"This year more than ever we are proud to support the festival, backing it all the way with extra funding to make it happen, make it safe and make it one to remember."

"I encourage all Victorians to get on board and support our funniest local acts as they return to the stage."