

Media Release

The Hon Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Development Victoria
Minister for Precincts
Minister for Creative Industries



Tuesday, 26 March 2024

LAUGHS IN SPADES AT THIS YEAR'S MELBOURNE COMEDY FESTIVAL

One of the world's biggest comedy events is set to take over the heart of Melbourne and beyond, with the 2024 Melbourne International Comedy Festival bringing three weeks of joy, laughs, superstars and free family fun to Victorians, all backed by the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks today joined acclaimed comedian Celia Pacquola and the festival team to launch this year's festival, running from Wednesday, 27 March until Sunday, 21 April.

This year's festival sees more than 800 performers from Australia and the world putting on more than 650 shows across 137 venues – from the Arts Centre Melbourne and Melbourne Town Hall to venues in Carlton, Moorabbin, Windsor, Werribee and Williamstown.

Alongside comedians from the UK, New Zealand, India, Mexico and more, Australian comedy stars such as Hannah Gadsby, Nina Oyama and Wil Anderson presenting their latest shows, emerging local performers launching their careers in the national finals of Class Clowns, Deadly Funny and Raw Comedy.

The popular family event *The (Very) Big Laugh Out*, returns bringing stand up, physical and musical comedy performances to Fed Square on Good Friday – and it's all free. There's also the *Comedy Club for Kids* and a music, dance and comedy performance by Sean Choolburra, better known as the voice of Maynard on *Bluey*.

The festival not only provides job opportunities for hundreds of performers, it directly employs more than 350 Victorians in roles such as event management, technical crew, front of house and ticketing.

Last year's festival injected \$31.3 million into the Victorian economy, with hundreds of thousands of comedy fans making their way to shows, flocking to restaurants, cafes and bars and benefitting a host of other city businesses.

Directly after the festival, the Melbourne International Comedy Roadshow will hit the road with this year's itinerary taking in 26 Victorian locations from Ararat to Echuca, Colac to Cowes and Warrnambool to Wodonga.

Melbourne International Comedy Festival runs from Wednesday, 27 March until Sunday, 21 April 2024. To book tickets and view the full program visit comedyfestival.com.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks

"Melbourne International Comedy Festival is not only an iconic major event for our state, it's one of the top global comedy events – attracting the best and funniest comedians and nurturing our own comedy stars."

"The Victorian Government proudly backs this festival because it's fun, it's a massive platform for our local talent and it stimulates business, visitation and big laughs across the city. There's no better time to be in Melbourne."

Quote attributable to Melbourne International Comedy Festival Director Susan Provan AO

"We're ready for giggles, surprises and brilliant ideas. Hundreds of venue staff are swinging into action to support all our Australian and visiting faves and Melbourne's bars and cafes are ready to make sure everyone is fed and watered. It's the best time of year in our beloved city".

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