

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP

Minister for Skills and TAFE

Minister for Water

Acting Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events



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FRIDA EXHIBITION BRINGS COLOUR AND CROWDS TO BENDIGO

Bendigo is once again setting the standard for regional cultural events with the exclusive *Frida Kahlo: In her own image* at the Bendigo Art Gallery drawing more than 100,000 domestic and international visitors – thanks to support from the Allan Labor Government.

Acting Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Gayle Tierney today announced that the exhibition – the first time this collection has been shown in Australia – drew 105,135 people to experience artworks, photographs and personal belongings of one of the most iconic artists of the 20th century.

More than 90 per cent of visitors came from outside Bendigo, with local hotels, restaurants and tourism operators reporting increased bookings and activity throughout the season – delivering a major local economic boost and reinforcing Victoria's place as Australia's cultural powerhouse.

The exhibition was secured by the Labor Government and developed by Bendigo Art Gallery in partnership with Museo Frida Kahlo in Mexico and presented exclusively in Bendigo.

It explored the connection between Kahlo's personal style, her revolutionary artwork, and the striking images that made her a global icon.

Bendigo Art Gallery has built a reputation as one of Australia's leading cultural institutions, with past blockbusters including *Elvis: Direct from Graceland*, *Tudors to Windsors: British Royal Portraits* and *Grace Kelly: Style Icon*.

Since 2012, these exhibitions have brought more than 688,000 visitors to the region and generated more than \$108 million in economic impact for Greater Bendigo.

The gallery's growing national and international profile is set to expand even further, thanks to a \$45 million major redevelopment backed by the Government, the City of Greater Bendigo, the Gallery Board and philanthropic supporters.

Quote attributable to Acting Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Gayle Tierney

"Bendigo has once again proven it can draw big names and deliver a major economic return for the region. This exhibition brought visitors from all over the world – boosting business and putting the spotlight on regional Victoria."

Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

"This success shows just how powerful the arts can be for regional economies – creating jobs and filling cafes, bars and hotels."

Quote attributable to Visit Victoria CEO Brendan McClements

"This exhibition was a great example of how world-class events can drive real outcomes for Victoria and showcase what makes our state 'Every bit different'."

Quote attributable to Bendigo Art Gallery Director Jessica Bridgfoot

"We look forward to many more major exhibitions in the years ahead as we undertake a transformation of Bendigo Art Gallery."

Media contact: Lloyd Skinner 0457 138 806 | lloyd.skinner@minstaff.vic.gov.au