

Sunday, 10 June 2007

WOMADELAIDE SET TO STAY

Premier Mike Rann has secured the future of Womadelaide for another five years from 2010, with an option for a further five to 2019, in a deal signed with WOMAD's Managing Director Thomas Brooman.

The Premier has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to look at the potential of creating a second annual WOMAD concert for South Australia in a regional area.

“The possibility of a special three-day WOMAD festival at a location yet to be decided – but not more than two hours out of Adelaide – is a fantastic opportunity to attract more people into our State and appeal to a bigger audience,” Mr Rann said.

“The MOU commits WOMAD to purchasing or leasing a large allotment of land to create a **WOMAD ‘Earth Station’**, at which an annual three-day outdoor music festival would be staged.

“Last month I visited WOMAD founder Peter Gabriel and Thomas Brooman at the famous Real World Studios in Wiltshire, UK, as part of the negotiations for this agreement.

“Peter Gabriel founded WOMAD in 1980 out of what he described as a *“pure enthusiasm for music from around the world.”*

“A special business case to determine the viability of the second WOMAD festival for SA would have to be completed before the final go-ahead for the festival is given.

“However, if it does go ahead, the Government is prepared to provide facilities on site that will allow for the education, promotion and improvement of both environmental protection and the impact of climate change.

“The Government will also agree to help fund demonstration projects to supply renewable energy power and sustainable water supplies for the site and we will also fund appropriate re-vegetation of the land.

“In addition to an annual concert, the WOMAD Earth Station would, throughout the rest of the year, conduct ongoing small-scale environmental workshops and skills development projects.

“The idea behind the Earth Station concept is to develop, engage and educate a public festival audience on the current critical environmental issues facing us today - including sustainability and climate change – through the arts, music, dance, indigenous activities, discussions, exhibitions and associated presentations.

“If it gets the green light, the first festival is expected to be held in October 2010.

“It is anticipated the first audience would number around 4000 campers.

“In the meantime, we are delighted to have secured WOMAdelaide for the long term.

“Since WOMAdelaide became an annual event in 2003, its appeal has broadened to a much more diverse audience.

“It’s been a fantastic way of introducing local Australian music audiences to an sensational array of outstandingly talented artists in both music and dance from across the world,” Mr Rann said.

“The 2007, Australia’s WOMAdelaide celebrated its 15th anniversary, the inaugural event being staged in 1992.

“Latest figures from the 2006 event show the number of spectators at WOMAdelaide increased by 28 per cent from 2005, with an estimated crowd over the three days of 75 000 people.

“Of the 10,000 of those people who were visitors from interstate or overseas, 78 per cent had made the trip to Adelaide specifically for WOMAdelaide.

“WOMAdelaide is a true South Australian success story with attendances having grown from around 23,000 in 1992. That means a total of more than one million tickets have been sold to the WOMAdelaide concerts.

WOMAdelaide currently leads the way in Waste Minimisation working closely with Zero Waste SA. After the 2006 festival, more than nine tonnes was turned to compost and over 15 tonnes of waste was diverted from landfill in total - that’s 65 per cent of the waste generated.

The 2008 WOMAdelaide event is on from 7 – 9 March 2008.