

**EMBARGOED
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The People's Celebration Full Program Announced for Woodford Folk Festival 2019/20

The Woodford Folk Festival 2019/20 programme was announced in full at the Annual Programme Launch at Woodfordia on Saturday (12 Oct) night, as is tradition.

Head of Programming, **Chloe Goodyear**, states that, "As always, this is a programme created by, with and for many people. We're overjoyed to share the culmination of nearly a year's work. It consists of 1,600+ shows across 25 stages."

"The programme is a collection of performances, workshops, talks, and experiences that celebrate who we are, examine the issues we're facing as a global and local community, and inspire us to move forward together," says Goodyear.

The six-day happening, which closes out one year and welcomes the next, strives to be more than just a "festival", more than an "event". According to Goodyear, "It is a coming together of souls; a bubbling cauldron of expression and creativity; an exploration of our cultures and a celebration of a compassionate community."

The marathon nature of the full season and day visitor access to the hinterland site challenges organisers each year. After a full year of reimagining this journey, organisers have honed and refined the visitor experience for day visitors and season campers alike.

Festival organisers have announced upgrades to internal transport and traffic arrangements, which will deliver significantly reduced entry time into the festival along with more space for season campers and more easily accessible and safer pedestrian corridors.

"Festivals are as old as our species and vital to our evolutionary being. They are the birthplace of commerce; the genesis of innovation and they help contribute to a humane and progressive society. Woodford Folk Festival aspires to be one of those," says **Festival Director Bill Hauritz**. "Written into the human psyche is the need to remove ourselves from the humdrum of everyday life, to express ourselves and together celebrate our very existence."

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The festival theme, *Imagining a Beautiful Future*, aims to encourage organisers, artists and patrons alike to explore the ways in which we might counteract some of the negative rhetoric surrounding the future of the world.

Hauritz is, however, aware that optimism can be a dangerous thing, explaining that, “We don’t want to inspire false hope, but together, if we can imagine a brighter, more promising future, we’ll make one”.

“Troubadours in medieval times carried the news, sang the stories and painted pictures of governments, places, wars and beauty. Musicians and artists were held in high regard,” says Hauritz.

“Woodford Folk Festival aims to create a platform where artists, speakers, comedians and scholars can profess their views in the ancient troubadour traditions. It’s about the here and the now, where we come from and visualising a clearer path to our future.

It’s through these artists, their spirit, their words and their passion that we can together, discover our beautiful future. We truly hope that this year’s programme inspires, excites and challenges all of our patrons the way it does us,” says Hauritz.

This year, Woodfordia will play host to the likes of modern-day troubadours, **Kasey Chambers**, playing the festival for the first time; **Emma Louise** playing from her ‘Lilac Everything’ album; **Amanda Palmer** on her ground-breaking, ‘There Will Be No Intermission’ tour; **Lior** playing his full ‘Autumn Flow’ album with band and strings; and **Horrorshow** and **The Herd** heading up a 21st birthday bash for the **Elefant Traks** label.

Though 65% of the programme are completely new-to-the-festival artists and presenters, patrons will enjoy much-loved returnees including **Kate Miller-Heidke**, **Harry Manx**, **Electric Fields** and **Archie Roach** in his first shows with **Paul Grabowsky** for his ‘Tell Me Why’ memoir and accompanying album.

As always, the programme offers the equivalent of a full festival programme of speakers and panel discussions, which this year features, the incomparable **Dr Karl**; **Leigh Sales** interviewing **Michael Gudinski**; visiting US guest and author of *Biology of Belief*, **Dr Bruce**

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Lipton; journalist **Kerry O'Brien** with **Noel Pearson**; and **Rhoda Roberts (AO)** in her annual 'Ancient Culture, New Conversations' series, amongst over 100 others.

For those patrons with a penchant for the wonderfully weird, Woodford Folk Festival presents a Circus & Cabaret programme full of delicious debauchery and dizzying theatrics. Amongst this glittering line-up is Australia's favourite trash glamour disco circus, **Briefs Factory**; surreal showgirl, obscene beauty queen and sex clown, **Betty Grumble**; Woodfordian regular, **Mario Queen of the Circus**; Australia's premier Indigenous showgirl, **Constantina Bush**, who will take patrons on a humorous journey filled with songs that have shaped her life; and **Amanda Palmer's** Weep Fest, where she invites the audience to join her in crying away the troubles of the old year, until they become tears of joy, gratitude and hope for the new.

The Children's Festival for the first time hosts the ever engaging and inspirational, **dirtgirl**, playing her hit songs of hope and love for the planet, alongside workshops such as, 'Wind Chimes from Waste' and talks about reusing, recycling, natural building and sustainability.

Principal Children's Organiser Becky Wandell says, "We pack so much love into this programme – sometimes it's overwhelming."

Flicking through the 145 page programme quickly confirms what those who have attended the festival before will tell you – you won't be able to see it all. Organisers strive to create a sense-tingling and immersive festival experience, liking it to exploring a new town - park up, settle into base camp and go for a wander.

"You probably won't visit every street corner or drink at every bar but, if we've achieved what we set out to, your experience will be deep and rich and it will be your own," says Goodyear.

Another Woodfordian one-liner is, 'There's something for everyone' – a cliché it may be, but for good reason – the programme's diversity aims to reflect the festival's broad and varied community.

Goodyear explains that, "The festival is a place for people to belong. Rather than being faces in a crowd, consuming stage shows, patrons, stallholders, volunteers and artists are creating the village that is Woodford Folk Festival."

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In their ongoing exploration of the art of celebration, typified by the now-iconic Welcome Ceremony and Fire Event, Woodford Folk Festival seeks out performers from all corners of the globe.

As well as a plentiful selection of homegrown talent – **Harry James Angus** of The Cat Empire, **Lime Cordiale** and Sydney hip-hop duo, **Horrowshow** to name a few – this year's international acts includes a bevy of Canadian mates. 'Snowbird' writer Gene MacLellan's daughter, the JUNO-winning **Catherine Maclellan**; adopted Woodfordians, **The East Pointers**; electrifying lyricist, **Basia Bulat**; and **Jeremy Dutcher**, the Polaris Music Prize winner, classically trained operatic tenor and composer who blends his Wolastoq First Nation roots into his music.

From our neighbours in the Pacific comes internationally renowned artist/activist, **Mama Mihirangi** (NZ) and her traditional female dancers, **The Mareikura**, in a powerful and fierce all-female Maori world-roots production.

The world tour doesn't end there however, with 30+ international groups represented in this year's programme including the **Boban Markovic Orkestar** (SERB), **The Brother Brothers** (USA), **Brighde Chaimbeul** (SCOT), **Elephant Sessions** (SCOT), **Blair Dunlop** (ENG), **Lucy Farrell** (ENG), **The Kimono Band** (JAP), **Tio** (VANUATU) and **Monks of Tibet** (NEPAL).

Zooming back in on home soil, four indigenous languages will be taught at the festival this year and in celebration of the UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages, Woodford Folk Festival will host the launch of the Mudburra/English Dictionary. This important publication is the result of a five-year collaboration between linguists at the University of Queensland and the Mudburra community of the Northern Territory.

The festival also welcomes its first visit from the Traditional Women Healers of North East Arnhem Land – important Elders and their daughters and granddaughters, who will wake up the Talking Circle each morning, telling stories for children and families and sharing their bush medicine, used as part of sacred knowledge for healing and smoking ceremonies.

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A decade of Shampine and late-night dancefloor antics will be celebrated at the Pineapple Lounge this year, complete with strictly-vinyl sets from **DJ DNO** and a specially curated house band.

The Blues Breakfast BBQ will this year be hosted by **The Kevin Borich Express**, headed up by Australian Blues Hall of Fame inductee, the legendary Kevin Borich. Patrons can enjoy snags hot off the barbie along with tunes and tales from the best of the Blues programme.

High-energy duo and cherished Woodfordian regulars, **Hat Fitz and Cara** are back, joining the line-up alongside **Jeff Lang, Karen Lee Andrews, This Way North, Buddy Knox** and international guests, **Mike Love and the Full Circle** (USA) and **Emily Barker** (ENG).

On the first day of the new year, patrons will be lucky enough to watch the sun slip below the horizon whilst listening to a reading from **Neil Gaiman**, multi-award winning, #1 *New York Times* Bestselling author of over a dozen books beloved by adults and children alike including, *American Gods*, *Coraline* and *Stardust*.

Featured alongside Gaiman in the Word Comedy programme is witty wordsmith, 25-year-old **Nina Oyama**, stand-up comedian, co-creator and star of ABC's *The Angus Project*; as well as the warm, lightning-paced comedic stylings of **Nikki Britton**, seen in the Melbourne International Comedy Festival Gala.

Determined to keep patrons on their toes, festival programmers introduce what is sure to become a Woodfordian tradition – **Bathing for Change: The Lord and Lady of Bath**. Throughout the week, festivillians of any gender can bid on one of two chances to win the luxury of fresh towels and clean pyjamas after they sink into a deep tub full of Dr Bronner's bath scents on January 1, starting the New Year squeaky clean and smelling divine. All money raised will be given in support of replanting the rainforests in Borneo.

As always, Woodford Folk Festival presents extraordinary female talent including **Dyson Stringer Cloher**, each incredible songwriters and powerful performers in their own right, join forces in an Aussie trio to be reckoned with. Sydney-based **Okenyo**'s beautifully poised and deeply evocative storytelling enriches the waters of neo-soul, while Papua New Guinean born **Ngaiire**, explores the challenge of cultural adjustment.

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Other women to watch include, **Handsome, Sahara Beck, Charlie Collins, SONiA disappear fear, Tia Gostelow, Laura Hyde** and folk/pop sister duo, **Oh Harlow**.

“Artists think out of the box,” says Goodyear. “They bring a perspective to our lives that we might otherwise miss - a simple love song can move us, a contortionist in a circus show can scare us, a comedian can bring tears from tragedy and a drummer can make us dance.”

“Artists performing at the festival continually report that the Woodfordian audiences are incredibly generous and supportive. We love our patrons and we’re grateful to the welcome that they provide,” says Goodyear.

Organisers have also noticed an increase in youth attendance. “Our festival is getting younger and it’s a trend we love to see,” she says. This year, the festival’s younger patrons will discover the Dja-Mandji, a beautifully architecturally designed bamboo hub of their very own.

Hauritz believes that, no matter your age, festivals are critical to the robust development of all people and all communities, explaining that, “All festivals depend on artists to deliver us from the humdrum, bring us into a plane where we can appreciate our very existence and celebrate all that’s positive in our lives.”

Woodford Folk Festival: 27 December 2019 to 1 January 2020

Tickets available online now at
woodfordfolkfestival.com/tickets

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Download high resolution imagery of the 2019/2020 poster art here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/n47zdocmu3p7jwm/AADMfNqH0HEokG9AUypJ48oda?dl=0>

Media Centre access here:

<https://woodfordfolkfestival.com/media/>

Apply for media accreditation* for the 2019/20 Festival:

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**Accreditation opens on 12 Oct and closes 4 Dec*