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### Woodford Folk Festival 36<sup>th</sup> Programme Launch

A perennial in the Australian festival calendar for 36 years, the iconic **Woodford Folk Festival** has announced another massive programme.

As always, the schedule is staggering in its diversity, quality and expression of the cultural zeitgeist.

The Woodford Folk Festival is a week-long celebration of incredible creative depth and cultural diversity. It's a place where lawyer, academic and Indigenous policy advisor **Noel Pearson**, takes to the stage to address festival-goers while 50 metres away, **DeJa Voodoo** hosts *Juju Jungle*, a mesmerising menagerie of marvels where cabaret meets mind-bending art; where multiple Walkley-Award winning journalist **Tracey Spicer** AM warns of the bigotry embedded in AI technology while Australia's Queen of Burlesque, **Imogen Kelly** runs a talk and workshop on breast health and burlesque; where Federal Arts Minister **Tony Burke** discusses the magic of art while **Austral** teach Irish dance steps, and where **Dr Karl** lectures on great moments in science while artists like **Regurgitator** rev a crowd up to fever pitch. It's also where beloved *Gardening Australia* host **Costa Georgiadis** hops off stage at the biggest venue onsite to grab a snack before jumping up later that night with his party band, **The More Please Orchestra**.

"We see the end of the year – Woodford time – as a time for revelling and reckoning, for recreating ourselves and gathering hope and goodwill around us to bring into a new year. We do this, along with our community, by inviting intelligent debate, creating diverse opportunities for reflection, and fuelling brilliant celebration," explains Festival Director, Woodfordia's Managing Director and Co-Founder, **Amanda Jackes**.

**Minister for the Arts Leanne Enoch** said the annual Woodford Folk Festival will usher in the new year with an inspiring celebration of arts, culture and community bringing together diverse artists, speakers and audiences.

"The much-loved Woodford Folk Festival is a highlight on our state's cultural calendar, showcasing the exceptional work of local, national and international artists and inviting audiences to participate in rich conversations, workshops and ceremonies."

"The Queensland Government supports Woodfordia to realise the key priorities of our *Creative Together 2020-2030* roadmap including elevating First Nations arts, sharing our stories and celebrating our storytellers, and activating local spaces and places."

"Events like the Woodford Folk Festival reinforce Queensland's reputation as a cultural tourism destination, generating positive social and economic outcomes, and showcasing our unique arts, cultures and stories as we look to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games when our cultural identity will be celebrated on the global stage."

Household names include first time visitor, **Ben Lee**, who, alongside his regular stage show is also dropping a DJ set as **DJ DadBod**. Locals will love the Brisbane-centric line up of **Resin Dogs**, the aforementioned **Regurgitator** and **Custard**, as well as the massive **AFRO DIZZI ACT** all-star show. Voices you'll recognise from television also have a strong presence – **Karise Eden** (*The Voice*) and

**Isaiah Firebrace** (*The X Factor Australia, Eurovision – Australia Decides*) are well-known to fans, but both first time visitors to the festival.

A cavalcade of incredible musicians and returning artists are set for the festival's biggest stages, including **Kasey Chambers**, **Kate Miller-Heidke**, ARIA nominee **Mo'Ju**, **Yirrmal**, **FourPlay String Quartet**, **Leah Flanagan**, and **Wanderers**. They will be joined by quickly rising stars and Woodfordian first timers like **Go-Jo**, **Odetta**, **A.Girl**, **Haiku Hands**, **Bumpy**, **Aya Ives**, **Steph Strings**, **Loretta**, **Late November** and **Felicity Urquhart** and **Josh Cunningham** (*The Waifs*).

International visitors **The East Pointers** (Canada) are returning to their Australian 'home' to Woodfordia after the immeasurable loss of their banjo player, **Koady Chaisson**, for three huge shows. The traditions of Scotland are represented by wonderful singer/songwriter **Dougie Maclean**, multi-award winning contemporary traditional three-piece **Assynt**, incredible fiddler **Ryan Young**, award-winning vocalist **Hannah Rarity**, and Irish/Scottish outfit, **Dallahan**, who as well as playing their own shows, will gather together on New Years' Eve for a Hogmanay celebration. Formidable singer songwriter **Lisa O'Neill** and the legendary **Andy Irvine** are visiting from Ireland, and trekking out from the United States are psychedelic Panamanian Kansas City-based band **Making Movies** and sensational cabaret star, **Rizo**. Bosnia's intriguing, ground-breaking Sevdalinka interpreter and composer, **Božo Vrečo** visits for the first time, and from Tibet via India, Japan and Australia, the beloved **Monks of Tibet**, **Tenzin Kunsang** and **Tenzin Choegyal** present the rituals, song and dances of Tibet. In collaboration with **What the French...** Woodford also welcomes **Colours in the Street (Alex Colours)**, **Cécile Lacharme** and **Hugo Barriol** for the first dates of their Australian tour.

"Because we're open to expressions of interest, there's a sense that the programme is creating itself each year," adds Programme Manager, Courtney Wild.

"As well as curated elements including our ceremonies and signature in-house events like the Comedy debate, Poet's Breakfasts, and our cultivation of elements that are important to us – such as 65% new content each year alongside previous favourites, continuing gender parity and inclusion – we also take an organic approach, listening to what artists themselves want to be presenting."

One programme where this is evident is the Talks and Ideas programme. Indigenous representation has always been a foundation of Woodfordia and this is evident with powerful speakers and presenters such as **Noel Pearson**, **Linda Burney** MP, **Leeanne Enoch** MP, **Lyndon Murphy**, **Mary Graham** and **Morgan Brigg** who are raising their voices in conversation and debate. **Rhoda Roberts AO** presents her perennially popular series, **Ancient Culture, New Conversations**, in which she explores artist's creative work and cultural experience – this year: **Yirrmal**; **Charlie Needs Braces**; **Isaiah Firebrace** and **Dr Shellie Morris AO**. Sharing the experiences and culture of remote Australia, **Dr Shellie Morris AO** and the **Borooloola Cultural Songwomen** sing to maintain and revive Indigenous languages, and **The Traditional Healing Women of North East Arnhemland** visit to share important cultural traditions, a huge undertaking and important part of this year's event. Functioning art gallery and laundromat **The Blak Laundry** is activated by **Libby Harward** and **Dominique Chen**, and revolves around a simple concept: bring your dirty linen, pop it on a warm wash, and engage in critical conversation whilst it cleans. Traditional Custodian and Jinibara delegate to the festival, **Uncle Noel Blair** releases his autobiography, *Man on a Mission*, after popping down to meet this year's crop of Woodfordian kids at the eight venue **Children's Festival**.

"It's important that our children grow up with access to all of the inspiring ideas, people and art that a programme like Woodford offers, while still remaining kids," says **Becky Wandell**, long-time creative producer of the playful and popular space for babies to 12 year olds.

“Our space provides opportunities for everything from circus to e-waste dismantling to bush crafts, dance parties with artists like **Samoko**, workshops and performances from Aussie folk legends like **Jan ‘Yarn’ Wositzky** and talks from beloved presenters like **Costa**. It’s a special, magical place. The kids are somehow both worn out and energised at the end of the week – and so are we!”

“While there are a lot of broadly recognisable names on the programme, as a community-based festival it’s really important to us that there are lots of opportunities for patrons to interact with artists, presenters and ideas that they can keep up with post-Woodford,” **Courtney Wild** continues. “We are a folk festival, after all.”

This is where curated events and series like the **Music Camp**, which is put together by **Alan and Kristin Kelly** from the award-winning **Barleyshakes**, and the **Sunny Coast Feature**, which is presented in collaboration with **Andrea Kirwin** and **PeaceRun Records**, come into play, alongside local artists, speakers and presenters and the extensive visual arts and crafts workshop programme in **Artisan Alley**. One such artist is **Kris Martin**, who’s been showing patrons how to weave baskets and other useful items from the invasive Cat’s Claw weed for many years.

There are opportunities to see new projects from beloved artists, such as **Kooralbyn**, an ensemble which includes *Grammy* nominated artist **Tenzin Choegyal**, **Kacey Patrick (Stringmansassy)**, and **Flamenco Fire’s Andrew Veivers**, and **Yirinda**, a powerful and timely collaboration between Butchulla songman **Fred Leone** and well-known musical innovator **Sam Pankhurst**.

Singer songwriters telling the stories of contemporary Australia include **Michael Waugh**, **Kelly Cork**, **Maggie Rigby (The Maes)**, **Alana Wilkinson**, and those making jokes about it include comedy programme curator **Sandeep Totlani**, **Fiona Scott-Norman**, **Harley Breen**, **Urvi Majumdar**, **Ting Lim**, **Nicolette Minster**, **Dane Simpson**, **Michael Connell**, **Nick Capper**, **Mandy Nolan**, and **Daniel Muggleton**. The Spoken Word programme explores an enormous diversity of age, gender, sexuality and cultural experience, and includes poets **Gabrielle Journey Jones**, **Sarah Lock**, **Lucy Wylie**, **Peter Mace**, **Oliver Roweth**, **Luke Robinson**, **Jason Roweth**, **CJ Shaw** and one of Australia’s leading folklorists and performers, **Keith McHenry**.

On the night of the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024, the festival community will gather for one of the festival’s most beloved ceremonies, which is now titled The Renewal. This year organisers have moved away from the burning of a spectacular fire structure to a ritual where the village expresses its dreams for the future. Directors **Linsey Pollak** and **Mark Bromilow** along with Visual Projection Artist **Craig Walsh** will work with a large cast to bring the festival dreams to life with “**A Village Dreams**”, a ceremony marking the significance of the renewal of the new year and hopes for all our future.

If you’ve never been to the **Woodford Folk Festival**, you won’t understand how programmes like morning Hilltop and Village Green yoga and tai-chi sessions, and a full programme of cultural dance and movement classes can exist alongside sparkling circus and rambunctious cabaret explosions from the Cirque and Parlour venues (this year includes – **Head First Acrobatics**, **Betty Grumble**, the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the **Queer Ball**, **Imogen Kelly**, **The Birdmann and Egg**, **Dr Hubble’s Bubbles**, **Kaput**, **Backbone Young Creators**, **Rema: To Emit Light** – the premiere of a collaboration between **Rako Pasifika**, **Rindi Harradine** and **Chelsea McGuffin Productions** – and more). It won’t be 100% clear how the strings of fiddles, guitars and mandolins ring out constantly in sessions at The Craic while the beloved Pineapple Lounge hosts crams nine-piece band onto a stage made for three and dances the night away with hours of some of the best local DJs. How can Woodfordia’s streets be constantly alive with giant puppets like **The Elder** and **Emir**, stilt-walkers, fantastical creatures and ambassadors from other lands



(**The Fae**, created by **Folly Games**) while **Robin Clayfield's** ceremony builders lovingly tend visitors walking **The Sacred Union Labyrinth** in quiet contemplation?

"Thanks to the support of our patrons, volunteers and our Federal and State governments, the Woodford Folk Festival is the size of a very large town," says Amanda Jackes

"So you can expect to have the kind of experiences you might have in a town entirely dedicated to arts, the environment and cultural expression in a six day stay. Plus, of course the additional benefits of long bush walks, swims in the beautiful freshwater Lake Gkula, and the comfort of your own home-away-from-home at your campsite. We love our festival. We hope that love is evident when you look through our programme to decide how you'll take part at Woodfordia this year."

The Woodford Folk Festival programme is available online along with all the information needed on *how to do Woodford* here: <https://woodfordfolkfestival.com/programme>

Buy tickets to this year's Woodford Folk Festival here: <https://woodfordfolkfestival.com/tickets/>

Demand for hiring on-site tents with bedding has grown, and bookings for these are filling quickly. The uber luxury Woodfordia glamping tents have already sold out and Pitch Luxury Tents and Tent City have limited numbers left. Visit [www.woodfordfolkfestival.com/prepare/accommodation/](http://www.woodfordfolkfestival.com/prepare/accommodation/) to book onsite accommodation.

The 2023 Woodford Folk Festival is supported by the Queensland Government through Tourism and Events Queensland and features on the It's Live! in Queensland events calendar. The event is held on Jinibara country in the Moreton Bay region.

ENDS

**For more media information regarding artists, interviews and festival images and to arrange interviews with Festival Director Amanda Jackes, contact Festival Media Liaison, Annah Evington at: [media@woodfordia.com](mailto:media@woodfordia.com)**

## IMAGES

A diverse array of professional images are available to download.

Flickr albums:

**High Res Artists and Presenters WFF 2023/24:**

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/woodfordfolkfestival/sets/72177720312038403/>

**General and historical Woodford Folk Festival / Woodfordia / Lake Gkula images:**

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/woodfordfolkfestival/>



Credit: Various – please refer to image metadata

## HASHTAGS

### General socials posts:

#woodfordfolkfestival #ThisIsQueensland #Woodfordia2023 #visitmoretonbay

### How to do Woodford posts:

#hiretentatwoodfordfolkfestival  
#volunteerwoodfordfolkfestiva

#woodfordfolkfestivalbus

#woodfordchildrensfestival