

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 16th December 2011

Sydney prepares to welcome the Year of the Dragon

The City of Sydney will next month reveal its most spectacular Chinese New Year Festival program yet – cementing its place as one of the biggest celebrations of the Lunar New Year throughout the world.

Ring in the Year of the Dragon from 20 January to 5 February, the internationally renowned arts festival will transform Sydney with more than 80 exciting events and a delegation of 160 performers, chefs and business leaders from the City's 2012 Chinese partner city, Chengdu.

Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP said: "The City's 2012 Chinese New Year Festival will be our biggest, brightest and best yet.

"From the jewel in the crown – the Twilight Parade – to much-loved markets, world-class art exhibitions, film screenings, karaoke competitions, food tours, live performances, dragon boat races, kids' activities and more, our 2012 Festival really will have something for everyone."

Chengdu, the capital of China's south-western Sichuan province, is known for its delicious spicy food, traditional tea ceremonies, stunning ancient temples and giant pandas. Sydneysiders will get a taste of all that Chengdu has to offer throughout the 17-day Festival.

The City can also announce its star-studded line up of 2012 Festival Ambassadors: MasterChef winner, TV chef and author Adam Liaw; comedian and TV personality Lawrence Leung; doctor, author and TV presenter Cindy Pan; and Paralympic gold medallist Lindy Hou OAM.

2012 Festival Highlights

Festival Launch – 6:00pm on Friday 20 January at Belmore Park – FREE

The Festival will kick off in grand style at Belmore Park with the official launch celebration, featuring a traditional eye dotting ceremony, firecrackers, exclusive dance and Sichuan opera performances direct from Chengdu and a delicious Asian food market.

Before the celebration gets underway, audiences can enjoy the contemporary beats of DJs live onstage, and the SBS Pop Asia radio crew will keep crowds entertained until late into the night with competitions, giveaways and non-stop Asian pop.

Chinese New Year Markets – Friday 20 to Sunday 22 January at Belmore Park

Get ready for delicious food, lion dancers, DJs, karaoke competitions, non-stop Asian pop, live Korean rock, film screenings, art and craft workshops and more. For three days, Belmore Park will be transformed into a pop-up Asian market place, with more than 50 stalls from our local Asian community and visitors from Chengdu.

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Food will be a highlight as chefs including MasterChef stars Adam Liaw and Alvin Quah demonstrate their sizzling cooking techniques, including how to master Lunar New Year specialities. Chefs specialising in fiery Sichuan cuisine will also provide some spice at Chengdu's food stalls.

Twilight Parade – 8:00pm on Sunday 29 January at Sydney Town Hall – FREE

The highlight of this year's Chinese New Year celebration, Sydney's annual Twilight Parade will be a feast for the senses with dynamic live music, amazing floats, flamboyant dragons, dazzling costumes, beautiful illuminated zodiac lanterns and much more.

The Twilight Parade is a great night out for young and old, with a unique mix of traditional and contemporary performances. More than 2,900 local and international performers will feature in this street spectacular, including 135 artists from Chengdu showing off their stunning Panda Puppets, Fire Dragons and ethnic dancers.

You will also see dragons from East and West, stunning floats, martial artists, circus performers, Chinese musicians, ballroom dancers, live art installations and visiting groups from Beijing, Shanghai, Anhui and Xian.

Brilliant light projections on buildings along the Parade route will turn the City centre into a mini-Hong Kong, while the Parade will literally finish with a bang in Darling Harbour with a fireworks show.

Dragon Boat Races – Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 February at Cockle Bay – FREE

This traditional Chinese sport has become a Chinese New Year Festival favourite. Thousands of people are expected to line the shores at Cockle Bay in Darling Harbour for the largest Dragon Boat racing spectacular in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Chinese New Year Dragon Boat Races see more than 3,000 paddlers take to the water. Up to 22 people in each boat paddle to the beat of the drum in a hard fought competition to reach the finish line.

For the full program, visit www.sydneychinesenewyear.com.au

Media Contacts

Keeley Irvin (02) 9265 9106 or kirvin@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Natasha Bowron (02) 9246 7267 or nbowron@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

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