

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 5th August 2011

Hot and spicy start to Year of the Dragon



Next year's Chinese New Year Festival is set to sizzle when performers from Sichuan province, the home of spicy food and giant pandas, help Sydneysiders ring in the Year of the Dragon.

Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan in south-western China, is Sydney's partner city for next year's festival, which promises to be the biggest and best yet.

Chengdu is often known as The Land of Abundance, has a population of 11 million and is famous for its delicious spicy food, traditional tea, stunning temples and giant pandas.

"The City's ongoing relationship with China enriches Sydney's cultural calendar, and I have no doubt we will develop a strong bond with Chengdu over the coming months as we prepare to celebrate the Year of the Dragon," said Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP.

"Sydney's Chinese New Year Festival is one of the world's most spectacular celebrations of the Lunar New Year, and I look forward to hearing more about how Chengdu will help make our 2012 festivities bigger and better than ever."

Officials from Chengdu, led by Qiu Haiming, Director of the Chengdu Municipal Foreign Affairs Office, have met with event organisers to discuss their participation in the 2012 festivities – including the world-famous Twilight Parade and a number of potential food-themed events.

The City's Chinese New Year Festival Advisory Group, made up of Chinese community leaders who provide practical assistance with running and managing the Festival, as well as essential input on cultural issues to ensure the success of the event, has also met for the first time ahead of 2012.

This year, the Festival Advisory Group welcomes a new member – Aaron Seeto, Director of 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art in Haymarket, board member of the National Association for the Visual Arts and a leading contemporary Asian-Australian visual artist, curator and gallery director.

City of Sydney Councillor Robert Kok, chair of the Festival Advisory Group said: "2012 is the Year of the Dragon, which symbolises power, strength and good luck. I look forward to working with our friends from Chengdu and the other members of the Festival Advisory Group to bring the Dragon to life in another exciting, innovative and gastronomically pleasing Sydney Chinese New Year Festival."

Over the coming months the Festival Advisory Group will investigate forming sub-committees made up of representatives from Sydney's Vietnamese and Korean communities, in recognition of the important role these cultures play in Sydney's celebration of the Lunar New Year.



MEDIA RELEASE



The 2012 Festival will run from Friday 20 January to Sunday 5 February, with the Twilight Parade and fireworks on Sunday 29 January expected to attract more than 100,000 people to the City's streets.

The Festival includes more than 60 events including markets, dragon boat races, temple tours, a film festival, art exhibitions, kids' events, cultural and historical tours, calligraphy demonstrations, opera and banquets.

More than 600,000 people attend the festival annually, making it one of the most popular events on Sydney's annual calendar.

The full 2012 program will be available online from late 2011.

To see highlights from this year's Festival, visit: www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/cny

Media Contacts:

City of Sydney: Keeley Irvin (02) 9265 9106 or kirvin@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Lord Mayor: Matt Levinson 0427 044 768 or mlevinson@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Chinese New Year Festival Advisory Group

- City of Sydney Councillor Robert Kok
- Lin Abbott – active Chinese community member and event organiser
- Bee Koh – Executive President, Australian Federation of Chinese Organisations
- Raymond Tai – Vice President of Chinese Youth League
- Imogen Yang – freelance curator and arts advocate
- Shah Yee – former President of the Haymarket Chamber of Commerce
- Brad Chan – President of the Haymarket Chamber of Commerce
- Sara Cheng – Manager of Greater China for Australian Business
- Professor Eng K. Chew – Professor at UTS China Research Centre
- Dr. Tony Goh – President of Australian Council of Chinese Organisations
- Josephine Lam – President of the Australian Fujian Association
- Vivien Sung – international Chinese artist, graphic designer and publisher
- Patricia Quah – President of Chinese Youth League
- Daphne Lowe Kelly – President of the Chinese Heritage Association of Australia
- Aaron Seeto – Director of 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art

