

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO: THURSDAY 18TH MAY

Return of iconic Bondi Festival serves arts, comedy and culture feast this Winter

Waverley Council is thrilled to announce the return of the much-loved *Bondi Festival*, boasting an astonishing arts line-up that's bolder and better than ever before, with world-class theatre, comedy, cabaret and interactive experiences, from Friday 30th June to Sunday 16th July 2023.

Returning to its spiritual home at the newly refurbished Bondi Pavilion (as well as various locations around Bondi), the 17-day, all-inclusive festival will have family-friendly shows and adults-only options. Alongside the world-class arts line up, visitors can also enjoy Bondi's famous ice-skating rink and the legendary *Bondi Vista Ferris Wheel*; a 32-metre-high ride with 360-degree views of the stunning Bondi Beach.

Festival director, Rachel Chant, is excited to bring this festival of contemporary arts back to Bondi.

"Over the past 11 years, Bondi Festival has brought together locals and visitors from across the country and welcomed hundreds of incredible artists to inject culture and joy into Bondi during winter," said Ms Chant.

"This year, I'm so excited to be welcoming returning artists, international guests, national festival stalwarts and emerging artists back to the Festival, presenting their works in some really exciting – and sometimes unconventional – venues."

"Whether it's seeing an award-winning show, getting drawn into an immersive experience, riding the panoramic Ferris Wheel or showing off your dog for the Inaugural Pavilion Paw Parade, there truly is something for everyone."

Mayor of Waverley, Paula Masselos, said since its re-imagination in 2020, the Festival has become a hub for local artists, venues, and grass roots organisations within our creative and diverse neighbourhood.

"Bondi Festival is just one of the ways Waverley Council is helping support our local economy along with our local arts industry and provide a platform for artists to bring joy to audiences," Mayor Masselos said.

"For two weeks over winter, it will transform our home by the sea into an eclectic, intimate and welcoming arts precinct for people of all ages to enjoy."

More than 30 different arts events and performances will run over the course of the 17-day festival.

Kicking off the opening weekend in Bondi Pavilion's Garu (northern) courtyard will be a performance from the renowned Jannawi Dance Clan, free shell-art and weaving workshops, bushtucker talks and food demonstrations, First Nations music, and First Nations food trucks to enjoy.

Visitors can also catch the award-winning new work from musical comedian **Gillian Cosgriff**, which recently won the highly coveted Most Outstanding Show Award at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival 2023, in her long-awaited return to comedy after three years starring in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*.

Week 1 will see **Ants** scurrying around Bondi Pavilion. Run by the world-renowned contemporary theatre company, **Polygot Theatre**, this interactive performance will bring children under the age of ten together to explore the landscape around them.

Fan-favourite, **24 Hour Party Playwright**, will also make its return on the Festival's opening weekend. Armed with laptops, inspirational objects, and bottomless coffee cups, six writers, six directors and a handful of actors will have 24 hours to come up with six brand new plays. This legendary annual event runs for one night only, so book your tickets early, and get ready for the freshest works ever seen on stage.

Week 2 will feature the "late night cult hit" and winner of the Adelaide Fringe Weekly Award, **Werewolves**. Night falls on the town of Millers Hollow, and werewolves are stalking innocent villagers. In this immersive game of accusation, deceit, and murder, can the villagers find the werewolves lurking in plain sight among them?

Bondi Festival's Inaugural **Pavilion Paw Parade** will see a celebrity-led dog parade of canine comrades strut their stuff at the iconic Bondi Pavilion. The hottest event for dog lovers since the release of Baha Men's 2000 hit single, "Who Let the Dogs Out", four-legged guests can simply show up on the catwalk or take part in a jungle of dog-themed, art activities.

Audiences can also catch award-winning performer **Bron Batten** wrestle with love and war in an explosive interrogation of her ill-fated affair with a conservative military official, and **CAKE**, with world-class circus, burlesque, and outrageous queer chaos in the messiest party since the Revolution.

In **Week 3**, the 'Trash Queen of Cabaret', **Tash York**, is back. Get ready for a raucous and rowdy happy hour, with powerful three-part harmonies, hilarious true stories, and improvised numbers. With countless awards and glowing reviews, **Happy Hour** combines Drag and Cabaret in a way unlike any other.

Brisbane-based collective **Pink Matter** will also bring **Betwixt** to the stage. A rallying cry for the street dancing community, **Betwixt** fuses spoken word and street dance to share stories of ruin and resilience.

The full program and tickets are available at <https://www.bondifestival.com.au>

Bondi Festival is presented in partnership with Bondi and Districts Chamber of Commerce.

BONDI FESTIVAL:

Dates: 30th June – 16th July 2023

Location: Bondi Beach and surrounds – Bondi Pavilion, Badlambs Barbershop, The Blue Hotel Bondi, Campbell Parade, Queen Elizabeth Drive.

Tickets: Open-access sites and ticketed events ranging from free to \$36.00.

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