



Hon. George Souris M.P
Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing
Minister for the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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LA TRAVIATA OPERA ON SYDNEY HARBOUR 2012 A RUNAWAY SUCCESS...AND IN 2013, CARMEN TO STAR

NSW Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Arts, George Souris, has congratulated Opera Australia on what has been an absolute triumph, ***La Traviata: Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour 2012***.

“The NSW Government’s investment through Destination NSW has been rewarded with a runaway success first up and a sure fire success in the ensuing two years, with Bizet’s *Carmen* to be performed on Sydney Harbour next year.

“This year’s production exceeded its sales target of \$6 million and more than half the audiences of 40,000, who attended one of the seventeen performances, new to opera. The audiences came from across Sydney, interstate and overseas.

“The project involved over 750 people, including 140 artists, 570 staff and crew and 60 volunteers.”

Mr Souris said Opera Australia is one of the world's very few opera companies experiencing growth.

“It is no wonder with such a grand and daring venture as we have experienced here on Sydney Harbour.

“Congratulations to the successful entrepreneurial duo of Chief Executive Adrian Collette and Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini, the magnificent financial support of Dr Handa, the great artists Emma Matthews, Gianluca Terranova, Ji-Min Park and Rachelle Durkin as well as New York Director Francesca Zambello and conductor Brian Castles-Onion.

“This event has been an exceptional advertisement for Sydney, showcasing the beauty of Sydney Harbour and the major events capability of the best festival and events city in the world.

“Through the work of Destination NSW we brought out 20 leading travel agents from China along with others from Britain, Singapore and New Zealand.

“Sydney’s success at staging this ambitious and audacious production with the city skyline, Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge as backdrop to a fireworks laden aria in the first act has created memories that will last a lifetime.”

Mr Souris said the stage is set for two more years with just as popular operas on the amazing harbour stage.

“In March next year I’m pleased to formally announce that Bizet’s *Carmen*, another well-known and accessible opera will take to the harbour stage.

“It will be directed by Ms Gale Edwards, whose highly successful production of ‘La bohème’ for Opera Australia last year was one of the Company’s most successful seasons of the past few years. Gale Edwards will work with designer Brian Thomson who returns after this year’s event, to again design an unforgettable and spectacular stage for the next event.

“This is sure to attract audiences from around the country and the globe,” he said.

Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini, who established the Opera on Sydney Harbour concept and was involved at every level of the project, said: “I knew we could do it! From the very beginning I believed in the talent and skill at Opera Australia and I am very proud of what we have achieved together.

“I pushed everyone to do a bit more than they are used to, and everyone rose to the occasion. I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank everyone for all their efforts, long hours and courage. This is a shared success.”

Mr Adrian Collette said: “We have had wonderful reports from patrons and consider the event to have been a great success. Once we have had time to analyse our sales and media results, we look forward to sharing the details of this success with the public on a wider scale. We thank the people of Sydney and beyond for sharing in this magical experiment with us!”

Mr Souris said the economic benefits of this major event resonate far beyond the final curtain call with the three year investment expected to add \$100 million into the NSW economy.

“Staging and investing in events such as this is all part of the NSW Government's determination to gain and keep the nation's No.1 position in musical and performing theatre and the arts.

“The events strategy is simple: keep a continuous diet of blockbuster shows, peak arts events, major sports events of all codes and festivals year round and in this way, any tourist arriving at any time of the year will be greeted with exciting offerings and attractions throughout the State.

“In addition to this great outdoor opera, we have a number of Australian and World premieres coming to Sydney, this year and next. These events will create business, tourism and jobs throughout the State.

“Congratulations once again to Opera Australia, Destination NSW and everyone involved in putting together an event of this scale.”