



**Hon. George Souris M.P**

Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing

Minister for the Arts

---

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

---

Monday 19 March, 2012

### **Minister Welcomes Blockbuster Musical, *An Officer and a Gentleman***

NSW Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Arts, George Souris, has today welcomed the cast and crew of the new musical *An Officer and a Gentleman* to their first day of rehearsals, ahead of its World Premiere on 18 May, 2012 at the Sydney Lyric Theatre.

"This is a major coup for Sydney to host the World Premiere of An Officer and a Gentleman ahead of international musical theatre destinations such as London and New York," Mr Souris said.

"I welcome the exceptionally creative folk who will put this blockbuster musical together – producers John Frost and Sharleen Cooper-Cohen (U.S producer), director Simon Phillips and the cast who have met for the first time today.

"They include lead performers Ben Mingay who will play Zack Mayo and Amanda Harrison who plays Paula Pokrifki.

"I am especially pleased to welcome the original screenwriter and co-writer of the musical Douglas Day Stewart, whose life experiences as a serving naval officer inspired one of the great love stories across the ages".

The 1982 film has been listed by the American Film Institute as one of the top ten love stories of all time".

Mr Souris said the staging of the world premiere in Sydney was proof again that more producers worldwide are choosing to premiere their musicals in Sydney, which offers a large talent pool of creative and technical skills and enthusiastic audiences and is a natural first choice as Australia's one global city.

"With this production on the NSW Events Calendar, Sydney is confirmed again as the number one city for first run musicals in Australia.

"Pursuing major events including blockbuster musicals through Destination NSW forms is a major part of NSW Government's strategy to rebuild the NSW economy.

"Destination NSW estimates that internationally renowned musicals can generate close to \$20 million over a six month run in direct economic impact.

"With our list of musicals just getting longer, this is great news for the NSW economy. We expect people to travel from across Australia and the Asia Pacific to see this world class production."