

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention: News Editor

Festival buzz begins

Big numbers dominated the launch of the 2013 Great Southern Festival program at the Albany Entertainment Centre on Wednesday 14 November.

Perth International Arts Festival (PIAF) director Jonathan Holloway outlined the program and promised an appreciative audience they would be able to take in a story of 14 billion years in 90 minutes at the Sydney Theatre Company's A History of Everything.

Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning reeled off statistics demonstrating the growth of the Great Southern Festival over the past decade, citing an estimated \$2 million impact on the regional economy in 2012.

The GSDC supports the Great Southern Festival with \$225,000 of Royalties for Regions funding over three years under the Regional Grants Scheme.

Mr Holloway said patrons would find exciting events in the 2013 program.

"We are tremendously proud of the entire program that we are able to present in the Great Southern," Mr Holloway said.

"The music program is really important down here. I came to see a few events last year and the energy the audience had would put any other festival in the world to shame.

"Every year when we finish working with the writers, all the writers who came down to Albany talk about this being the absolute highlight of their trip – it's almost embarrassing for the ones we don't send here," Mr Holloway said.

Apart from A History of Everything, the 2013 program features Invisible Atom, classical musicians, New Orleans ensemble Soul Rebels, Australian outfit The Raah Project, a writers program with 12 authors, a 12-film cinema program and a Playmakers focus on the guitar.

A special exhibition features the works of the late Ed Smidt, who photographed Albany and further afield in a career spanning decades, including the final years and closure of the whaling industry.



Building partnerships for regional prosperity

Mr Manning said the festival, initiated by the GSDC and PIAF in 2003, benefited the region through increased tourism and opportunities for artist development.

“When the festival started, it drew a total audience of about 5000, and by last year that had grown to more than 20,000,” Mr Manning said.

“Evidence gathered by the Commission demonstrates that the economic impact of the festival was about \$2 million last year.

“The Great Southern Festival has generated productive partnerships within the region and has provided enthusiastic audiences for many local performers.

“Last year the festival drew increased interest from Perth patrons, and 10 per cent of all patrons came from outside the region,” Mr Manning said.

The Great Southern Festival program and ticketing information are available at www.perthfestival.com.au or the Albany Entertainment Centre.

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