

## Sydney Festival announces new Festival Director 2017-2019



Sydney Festival today announced **Wesley Enoch** as the incoming Festival Director for a three-year tenure from 2017-2019. He will take the reins from Lieven Bertels, who completes his term in 2016, marking the Festival's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Wesley is currently the Artistic Director of the Queensland Theatre Company (2010-15). He has been the Artistic Director of Kooemba Jdarra in Brisbane (1994-97) and Ilibijerri in Melbourne (2003-04), Resident Director for Sydney Theatre Company (2000-01), Associate Artistic Director of Belvoir (2006-08), a Trustee of the Sydney Opera House (2003-2011) and a director of the Indigenous section of the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony.

He has directed six projects for Sydney Festival over the past 15 years: *The Sunshine Club* (2000), *Eora Crossing* (2004), *The Sapphires* (2005), *Nargun and the Stars* (2009), *I am Eora* (2012) and *Black Diggers* (2014). Wesley has worked with almost every major theatre company and festival in the country and toured shows internationally.

He won the Patrick White Playwrights' Award in 2005 for *The Story of the Miracles at Cookies Table* and was shortlisted for both the New South Wales and Victorian Premier's Literary Awards.

Deputy Premier and Minister for the Arts, Troy Grant, said "Sydney Festival is one of the world's pre-eminent arts and cultural festivals and I am delighted that Wesley Enoch will be the Festival's new Director. Wesley has already made a significant contribution to the Australian arts landscape and brings a wealth of experience to this coveted role in which he will lead one of our country's most important annual events alongside Executive Director, Chris Tooher."

The Lord Mayor, Clover Moore MP said "Wesley is one of Australia's finest creative talents and it's terrific to see him at the helm of Sydney's major cultural festival. Judging by his past contributions to Sydney Festival, with productions like *I am Eora* and *Black Diggers*, he will not shy away from the important issues. Under Wesley Enoch's watch I'm looking forward to seeing more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and audiences, who make such a valuable contribution to our country's creativity and culture, taking part in the Festival."

Wesley is delighted about the new challenge, saying "Excited is too inadequate a word for how I'm feeling. I have had a long love affair with Sydney Festival and its audiences. I'm totally thrilled to return in the role of Festival Director. The Festival is a huge family of people who give their time, resources, money and talent; and I want to meet every single one of them. Festivals provide a

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huge cultural canvas and help reimagine a city, helping it think creatively and see things differently. I'm looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting started."

The Chair of Sydney Festival's Board, Sam Weiss said "The Board of the Sydney Festival is pleased to welcome Wesley Enoch as incoming Festival Director. We have a long history of collaboration and are enthusiastic about the opportunity to work together to bring Wesley's vision for the Festival to life over the next three years."

Sydney Festival is one of Australia's best-loved annual events, attracting hundreds of thousands of people with its stunning array of free and ticketed performances in theatre, dance, music, film, visual arts and talks as well as its unrivalled program of free large-scale outdoor events.

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**Please click on the following link to download images of Wesley Enoch, by Darren Thomas.** The link will expire on 15 June. <https://www.hightail.com/download/bXBIS3dqays3bURxYk1UQw>

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