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About the Bendigo Easter Festival and the Membership Drive for 2004/2005

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The Bendigo Easter Festival is held from Good Friday through to Easter Monday in the street and parklands of Bendigo. It is the oldest and longest running Festival in Australia and in 2005 it will celebrate 135 continuous years. **The theme for the celebrations in will be 135 Dragons**, because of our strong ties with the Chinese Community of Bendigo.

The Festival is essentially a community inspired event, which boasts the annual appearance of authentic Chinese dragons including the longest Imperial dragon in the world, Sun Loong in the Easter Monday Gala Parade. The four-day program of celebrations and events is held over the Easter period and is distinguished by an evening torchlight parade and the popular Chinese Spring Festival. The festival program also offers music, fireworks, performances, numerous umbrella events and free, quality family entertainment.

The 2004-2005 Bendigo Easter Fair Inc. membership drive will be launched at the Bendigo Easter Fair Inc AGM on August 26 2004.

This is a fabulous opportunity for the community and Businesses to support their local Festival and become proud members of Australia's oldest Festival. Individuals and business have already joined up as members and the list is growing fast. It is so encouraging to see that Bendigonians are so loyal to Bendigo and its Festival." Fay Buerger President of the Bendigo Easter Fair Inc. said.

All members who support the Festival also invest in the future of their community and ensure that their children and customers will have the same benefits and experiences that they have had with our wonderful Festival. Members are also offered discount at leading local retail outlets, discounts on festival tickets, a quarterly newsletter and depending on the level of membership free entry to the parades and valuable promotional and networking opportunities.

The program of events encompassed Coliban Family Day at the Lake, Easter on Bull, Cacklin' Kids, the Street Carnival, the Chinese Spring Festival and the Torchlight and Gala Parade.

Coliban Family Day at the Lake Event

This highly successful family event celebrated its second birthday in 2004. This event was held on the sunny banks of one of Bendigo's premier public spaces Lake Weeroona.

The event is primarily aimed at creating a comfortable, friendly atmosphere for families and friends. It provides free, accessible, high quality entertainment with a focus on providing opportunities for local performers. The day also includes a variety of demonstrations, displays and strong community involvement. A highlight of the day is a popular National children's performance group, which attracts thousands of young Easter bunnies. The program is kept vibrant and fresh with new additions each year.

The site is decorated with lots of colourful stalls, selling food and children's novelties and there are lots of community displays, demonstrations and activities to entertain and educate the children throughout the event. Families are encouraged to bring a

picnic and a bottle of local wine and enjoy themselves responsibly while being positive role models to the wider community.

The day has an emphasis on laughter, entertainments and education for our young audience in a safe, healthy and family environment.

Cacklin Kids

Nearby at the Civic Gardens on Saturday and Sunday you will find the Cacklin' Kids area where the youngsters can celebrate and be entertained free Puppets, Magic Shows, and the award winning clowns. The ever-popular Humphrey B Bear also drops by on Sunday morning following an Easter Egg hunt. There are lots of activities including workshops and face painting, to try and the CFA will provide some great rides.

Street Carnival

Adding to the buzz of the weekend are the ever-popular rides and stalls of The Carnival, right in the centre of the city.

The Xerox Business Centre Chinese Spring Festival

This popular annual festival is held at the Golden Dragon Museum precinct on Easter Sunday. Thousands of people come to witness the Awakening of the Dragon and while they wait expectantly they are entertained by Chinese performances, colourful ceremonies including the firecrackers. This event provides a rare cultural experience that celebrates Bendigo's unique Chinese history. This event receives more media attention each year and also receives a significant amount of promotion leading up to the event.

Torchlight Parade

The Bendigo Easter Festival Torchlight Parade is held on Easter Sunday. The parade entries are made up of CFA entries, fire-breathing performances, and brightly lit community floats and includes an illuminated Chinese procession. The parade route begins in the heart of Bendigo and travels towards Lake Weeroona where thousands of people watch the fireworks display, which lights the Bendigo skies, and the smiles of thousands of children. At this stage this is the only outdoor evening event and it offers considerable opportunity for advancement and creative development.

Easter Monday Gala Parade

The Easter Monday Gala parade is the hallmark event of the Bendigo Easter Festival. This event is held close to the heart of Bendigonians as the day that celebrates Bendigo's culture and community. Over 70,000 people from the Bendigo region, Victoria and interstate line the central streets of Bendigo to witness the spectacle.

The Easter Monday Gala Parade has become a celebration of Bendigo's cultural heritage and in particular Bendigo's Chinese heritage. The event has strong focus and participation from the local business and the community.

For over one hundred years, generations have traditionally watched the community floats and waited in anticipation for the spectacular Chinese ending. This includes the superbly decorated Chinese banners, traditional Chinese costumes, and the Bendigo Lion Teams and is the sensational appearance of Sun Loong.

The Bendigo Easter Festival Advisory Committee and the Bendigo Easter Fair Inc. have been working together to improve areas within the overall management and conduct of future festivals.

The Committee has been working to improve access to facilities and sites, increase the signage, review the program distribution, and continue to work with traders and stakeholders to improve communication and partnerships

Operational

A survey was conducted by La Trobe University Bendigo to measure the audience and participants reaction to the Festival

Overall attendees were very satisfied with the Festival. All of the people surveyed indicated that all of the events were popular and that none were unpopular.

That 85.5% of the people interview indicated that they would be likely to attend next year's festival.

50.2% of the attendees were male and 49.8% were female.

64% of the attendees were from the Bendigo region and 15% were from Melbourne. 14% were from intra state. 45% of the responses stayed in payed accommodation overnight.

2004-2005 Bendigo Easter Fair Inc Membership Drive

There are four levels of membership available and they are the Platinum Membership \$550, Gold Membership \$275, Community/not for profit organisations \$40 and, Individual Membership \$20.

Current Members include Bendigo Advertiser, Country Design, Rogers & Every, Cohen, Kirby & Iser, BGA Architects, Darren Mawby & Associates, Cathedral Motor Inn, Telstra Licensed Shop, Coliban Water, Mulqueen Family Funerals, Gillies Retail, Curnott Dyett, Bendigo Antique Fair.

Membership forms are available at the Bendigo Visitor Information Centre in Pall Mall and the Cultural Development and Events and Easter Festival office reception or contact the Bendigo Easter Festival office and the friendly staff will send you out a membership form. info@bendigoeasterfestival.org.au or telephone 03 54 34 64 64 PO Box 36 Bendigo 3550

Logos-BEE/Sandhurst Trustees/CoGB

135 DRAGONS
The streets of the City of Bendigo will soon be filled with the fabulous sounds and sights of a variety of groups, exhibits and individuals joining together to celebrate the joys of Easter.

2004-2005 Sponsorship Drive.

New Sponsors are needed to make the 2005 Sandhurst Trustees Bendigo Easter Festival the greatest ever Festival.

There are 4 levels of sponsorship available. Premier Sponsorship \$25,000; Gold Sponsorship \$10,000; Heritage Sponsorship \$5000; Shiraz Sponsorship \$2,000 These sponsorships include The Gala Parade, The Street Banners, Itchy feet Pep Band, Fireworks, Cacklin Kids Carnival and many more. Sponsorship proposals can be tailored to suit your Business and your interest. Please contact the Bendigo Easter Festival at Cultural Development and Events office next to the Library in Hargreaves Street or phone 54346464 or contact info@bendigoeasterfestival.org.au

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