



Friday 13 March 2009

2009 Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour: Tenders Now Open

Communities around Australia and New Zealand have a unique opportunity to host one of the world's most coveted trophies, the Emirates Melbourne Cup, with tenders now open for the Victoria Racing Club's annual Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour.

Throughout its six-year history, the Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour has travelled more than 160,000 kilometres and visited close to 150 different towns and cities across Australasia and reached thousands of people all over the world.

This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity is open to all community groups, councils and racing bodies in rural, regional and capital cities to host a leg of the Tour on its extensive journey around Australia and New Zealand.

Primary schools, hospitals and aged care facilities based in capital cities are also encouraged to submit a tender.

This year the Tour will retain its existing theme: "The Melbourne Cup: A National Icon," and the VRC is encouraging organisations around Australia and New Zealand to nominate their town or city to be included on the 2009 Tour itinerary, particularly those that are iconic or share a link to the world-famous horse race.

VRC Chief Executive, Dale Monteith, has been impressed by the overwhelming interest in the Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour from communities around Australasia over the past six years.

"The Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour is now an integral component in the lead up to the highly anticipated Melbourne Cup Carnival and has been widely embraced by communities throughout the country.

"Last year, the VRC received a record number of 53 tenders, of which were all of an exceptionally high standard and the VRC is looking forward to another fantastic response."

"The feedback from the communities that participated in the 2008 Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour has been extremely positive," said Mr. Monteith.

Iconic outback town, Birdsville was just one of the 26 towns and cities visited on the 2008 Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour and its effect on the community was powerful.

Event organiser, Brian Mooney from the Diamantina Shire Council said: "The 2008 Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour was a truly jubilant experience for our town and something our community is still talking about to this day."

The Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour aims to highlight the heroes connected with the 148-year history of the illustrious horse race and last year was no exception, with the line up including former Chief Steward Des Gleeson, and former champion Melbourne Cup winning jockeys John Letts, Roy Higgins, Greg Hall and John Marshall.

Newcomer to the Tour Des Gleeson, said of the Tour: "I feel so positive about the whole exercise, especially from my perspective as the former Chief Steward on Emirates Melbourne Cup Day where I have always focused on the race itself."

"Last year taking the 2008 Emirates Melbourne Cup to the people of Australia was a real eye opener for me and I can now fully understand why the Emirates Melbourne Cup is really the 'race that stops the nation'".

Celebrating the cultural and social significance of the Melbourne Cup and 'taking the Cup back to the people' make up the core focus on the annual Tour.

In addition to taking part in community-based events – including street parades, community festivals, gala events, cocktail parties, special race days and visits to schools, hospitals and aged care facilities – the Tour provides valuable opportunities for communities to raise vital funds for local charities.

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The Tour will launch in August with a media announcement of successful tenders, and officially 'hit the road' at the end of September to begin its annual journey, visiting approximately 25 cities and towns across Australia and New Zealand, before arriving at Flemington on the 3 November for the running of the 149th Emirates Melbourne Cup.

Tenders are open to all Australasian communities and community groups online at www.melbournecuptour.com.au. **Closing date for submissions is Wednesday, 15 April at 5pm.**

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