



CREATIVE MELVILLE MEDIA RELEASE

Subject: Songs for Freedom returns to Dyoondalup Point Walter Reserve for another unforgettable evening

Release date: Thursday, 13 January 2022

Songs for Freedom will return to the City of Melville on Saturday, 26 February for a glorious evening at Dyoondalup Point Walter Reserve in Bicton, celebrating the living culture, stories and songs of where the desert meets the sea in the West Pilbara.

The City of Melville is partnering with arts and social justice organisation Big hART, the Roebourne community and Perth Festival for this year's event, which premiered in 2021 and attracted 3,000 people to Dyoondalup, earning rave reviews from audiences who described the concert as "exceptional," "uplifting," "captivating" and "inspirational."

In 2022, *Songs for Freedom* is an umbrella event of the Perth Festival and will return to Dyoondalup for a sublime evening celebrating country and peace, with some fresh new artists taking the stage. All the songs which feature on the night are written by the Ieramugadu (Roebourne) community on Ngarluma country and are part of an incredible legacy of creative development which has seen close to 100 songs written by community since 2011.

Music direction will once again be led by broadcaster and Grammy award-winning artist Lucky Oceans, with performances by prominent Ieramugadu musicians such as Tyson Mowarin, alongside an ensemble of renowned Western Australian musical collaborators, including Kankawa Nagarra, Naomi Pigram, Stephen Pigram, John Bennett, Jay Jarome and David Hyams performing alongside Elders from the Ieramugadu community.

City of Melville Mayor the Hon. George Gear JP said after a warmly received debut in 2021, it was wonderful to see *Songs for Freedom* artists return to Perth and the banks of the Derbarl Yerrigan (Swan River) with new songs and imagery celebrating the continuous living culture of the Pilbara.

"We are encouraging everyone to pack a picnic and gather their friends, family and loved ones for an unforgettable night of music, peace and freedom," said Mayor Gear.

“The partnership with Big hART and Perth Festival is part of the City of Melville’s evolving and expanding arts and culture program, supporting our vision of a vibrant and inclusive community.

“We acknowledge and express our deep gratitude to the Noongar Elders and their custodians past, present and emerging, on whose Country this concert is performed.”

This year’s Songs for Freedom will include an inclusive, intercultural program of events on Whadjuk Boodja in the lead-up.

Naomi Pigram and Kankawa Nagarra will run music and songwriting workshops with women in the Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison, there will be musician mentoring opportunities with Tyson Mowarin and a public exhibition ‘Country Freedom Peace’ opening on Wednesday, 23 February at the Yagan Mia Wireless Hill Museum in Ardress, featuring stunning work by high profile and lesser known artists from the Pilbara, including award-winning artwork from the Cossack Art Awards.

Songs for Freedom is the culmination of 10 years of songwriting development and intercultural exchange on Ngarluma country in the West Pilbara involving leading Australian musicians - in the community, the prison, with Elders and young people. Workshops began in the prison to honour John Pat, a 16-year-old whose death in custody in 1983 brought much sorrow and trauma to Roebourne.

Through songwriting, Ieramugadu began to sing again, giving rise to the Murru album and a series of concerts presented annually at the John Pat Peace Place in Ieramugadu on the International Day of Peace. Community have had their songs sung by Paul Kelly, Emma Donovan and The Waifs’ Vikki Thorn, shared the stage with Archie Roach and opened the 2014 Melbourne Festival in Federation Square.

Founded in 1992, Big hART is a not-for-profit organisation which has worked in 50 communities in remote, rural, regional and urban Australia. Big hART works with communities to make content, build community and drive positive change. Big hART was first invited to the Ieramugadu community by senior women Elders in 2010.

What: Songs for Freedom
When: Saturday, 26 February
5.00pm – Children’s and cultural activities
7.00pm to 9.30pm – Concert
Where: Dyoondalup Point Walter Reserve
Cost: Free

***Songs for Freedom* is family friendly and food will be available on site.**

The City of Melville is working to deliver this event safely in line with the WA Health directions. People aged 16 years and over must show proof of their double dose COVID-19 vaccination status, along with identification, to enter this event.

Changing restrictions mean the City of Melville will remain flexible and may have to make event management changes with short notice. Patrons are encouraged to register for this event to receive the latest health and event updates.

www.melvillecity.com.au/songsforfreedom

Image: Songs for Freedom concert, 6 March 2021. Photo: Linda Dunjey.

For media enquiries, images and interview requests, contact:
Lucy Gibson | Creative Melville Publicity
Lucy.Gibson@melville.wa.gov.au | 0402 549421

For general City of Melville media enquiries, contact:
Aaron Corlett | Communications Officer (Media)
media@melville.wa.gov.au | (08) 9364 0198

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Authorised for Release by:

Marten Tieleman
Chief Executive Officer

Hon. George Gear JP
City of Melville Mayor

Christine Young
Director Community Development