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Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

VRC Launches 150th Melbourne Cup Celebrations

The Victoria Racing Club (VRC) today officially launched its Melbourne Cup 150th celebrations at Flemington Racecourse, announcing an extensive year-long program of initiatives and events to commemorate the milestone, with the help of some of the biggest names in Australian and international racing.

Key initiatives were unveiled at the launch including a calendar of events to be run in partnership with state and local government, tourism and trade agencies, businesses, sponsors, industry participants and national and international communities.

“The 150th running of the Melbourne Cup is a chance to celebrate our great heroes and memorable stories.

“We want Australians to unite in the celebrations as we position the Melbourne Cup for the next 150 years, by ensuring it creates an enduring legacy in Australia,” said VRC Chairman, Mr Rod Fitzroy.

Plans for the 150th running of the Melbourne Cup include the development of a Visitor’s Information Centre, Heritage Trail and Walk of Fame at Flemington, and the launch of a significant cultural heritage program to include a series of gallery exhibitions, symposiums, and the development of a web-based national school education program.

A commemorative stamp produced by Australia Post, an Australian Mint commemorative coin and a special commemorative book published by Slattery Media, titled *The Story of the Melbourne Cup – Australia’s Greatest Race*, will also be produced in recognition of the milestone, along with a DVD of the same title.

A series of fashion and racing ambassador announcements will also take place throughout the year to highlight some of the national and international participants who have contributed to the success of the Melbourne Cup.

“The focus on all activities is to be on the national heritage of the race and contribution it has made to Australian culture and our identity.

“In support of this, the Victoria Racing Club is delighted to announce that the 150th Melbourne Cup has received endorsement from the Australian National Commission for UNESCO acknowledging it as an event of Cultural Significance to Australians” said Mr Fitzroy.

Deputy Premier and Racing Minister Rob Hulls said the Brumby Labor Government was proud of its involvement in the celebration. “The Melbourne Cup is an integral part of Victoria’s extensive tourism infrastructure, and we are confident the activities planned for the 150th anniversary will help to further increase visitation to our great state,” Mr Hulls said.





“The Melbourne Cup has had a significant impact not only on the City of Melbourne, but the entire nation,” added Lord Mayor Mr Robert Doyle, who spoke at the event. “It has not just influenced our sporting culture, but our collective national identity,” he said.

A stellar line up of racing royalty assisted the proceedings at Flemington today, including international guests Dermot Weld and Michael Kinane, the duo who firmly cemented the Melbourne Cup on the international stage with *Vintage Crop*'s win in 1993, along with Japanese superstars, Yasunari Iwata and Katsuhiko Sumii, who took home the quinella with *Delta Blues* and *Pop Rock* in 2006. Also joining them was 1985 winning international trainer, John Meagher.

Three-time Melbourne Cup winner and local hero Lloyd-Williams also featured, alongside jockey Michael Rodd. Local racing champions Damien Oliver, Glen Boss and Steven King also took part in the spectacle, and were joined by ex-jockey turned notable trainer Pat Hyland.

In addition to recognising the contribution of these special guests to the rich heritage of the 'race that stops a nation', the event paid homage to all great heroes, influential figures, racing clubs, communities and visionaries that have taken the Melbourne Cup from its humble beginnings in 1861, to the international phenomenon it is today.

The launch was marked with a special moment of significance when Mark De Mestre, grandson of the first Melbourne Cup winning trainer Etienne De Mestre, handed over the 2010 Emirates Melbourne Cup trophy to Mr Fitzroy.

Crafted by Hardy Brothers Jewellers and valued at \$150,000, the 2010 Emirates Melbourne Cup trophy has returned to the design of the illustrious 1930 Cup won by the legendary Phar Lap. Remaining 18ct gold and weighing 4kg the Cup is modelled on the original 'three handled loving cup' first conceived in 1919 by master jeweller James Steeth.

At the launch, Mr Fitzroy also gave thanks to principal partner Emirates, whose continued support has enabled the 2010 Emirates Melbourne Cup to offer record prize money of \$6,000,000 AUD, retaining its place as the richest handicap race in the world.

“Emirates has a well established commitment to sports sponsorship, both in Australia and around the world, and we are proud of our long standing association with this iconic event. As the Cup celebrates its 150th year, Emirates looks forward to continuing with this valuable partnership and sharing the celebrations with Melburnians and the wider Australian community,” said Stephen Pearse, Emirates Vice President Australia.

“The Melbourne Cup is Australia's Cup, the people's cup, and this year's 150th celebrations will ensure we set the framework for success well into the next century,” said Mr Fitzroy.

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