



[www.melbourncupbusinessnetwork.com.au](http://www.melbourncupbusinessnetwork.com.au)

## **AUSTRALIA'S RICHEST SPORTING TROPHY ARRIVES IN LONDON**

*Horseracing and Rugby League to highlight blockbuster weekend*

**(Sept 17, 2008: London, UK)** The Victoria Racing Club (VRC) has arrived in London with its world-famous 18-carat gold Emirates Melbourne Cup trophy - valued at £57,300 - ahead of a special event to be held with England's Rugby League team to promote the forthcoming blockbuster sporting weekend in Melbourne.

Visiting London as part of an international strategy - which has seen the world-famous trophy travel to destinations such as Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Shanghai, New York, Los Angeles, and Auckland - the VRC will highlight Melbourne's business and tourism opportunities at an exclusive cocktail event which will be attended by England's Head Rugby League Coach, Mr Tony Smith and members of the English team.

It is no secret that the UK and Australia share a healthy passion for sport, and Melbourne, the home of the Emirates Melbourne Cup, is counting down to one of the biggest sporting long weekends ever witnessed in Australia. Between 31 October and 4 November, the city will stage the rugby league clash between Australia and England; the international rules football match between Ireland and Australia; Derby Day, the first day of the Melbourne Cup Carnival, and will culminate with the running of the Emirates Melbourne Cup.

"The fact that there are two international sporting events being staged on the same weekend as the start of our Melbourne Cup Carnival provides great synergy and an opportunity to promote the weekend as a major sporting blockbuster," said VRC Deputy Chief Executive, Ms Sue Lloyd-Williams. "For Melbourne it provides an outstanding opportunity to attract international visitors, while for the VRC it is bound to add to the already large numbers of international guests at Flemington during the four-day event."

Ms Lloyd-Williams said thousands of fans from England, Ireland and across Australia were expected to converge on Melbourne for one of the biggest sporting weekends in the city's history. "This blockbuster weekend highlights Melbourne's reputation as the sporting capital of the world."

Referred to in Australia as 'the race that stops a nation', the Emirates Melbourne Cup is a day of national celebration and is the only event that literally halts the entire nation from working. The race is valued at approximately £2.52 million, making it the richest handicap race in the world, and attracts a worldwide television audience of more than 700 million people in 120 countries and territories, with millions more either viewing or listening to the event on the Internet.

It is the linchpin of the Melbourne Cup Carnival and has played a principal role in establishing Victoria's Spring Racing Carnival as Australia's major annual sporting event. The four-day event is considered a marketing phenomenon in Australia and an important economic contributor to the State of Victoria, generating £192.6 million towards the State's coffers.

"The Melbourne Cup Carnival offers a week of world-class thoroughbred horse racing action intermingled with an exciting array of high profile and prestigious on-course and off-course social and business events," said Ms Lloyd-Williams. "This presents the perfect platform to network, build relationships and entertain clients across a range of relaxed environments, particularly with the other international events being staged this year."

"Business people in Australia are keen to foster ties with international contacts, so the VRC has developed the *Melbourne Cup Business Network*, which is free to join, to help facilitate networking and business building opportunities between Australian and international businesses around the positive and dynamic atmosphere of the Melbourne Cup Carnival," said Ms Lloyd-Williams.

To register visit <http://www.melbournecupbusinessnetwork.com.au/>

**For further information contact:**

Ms Sue Lloyd-Williams  
Deputy Chief Executive, Victoria Racing Club  
+61 412 329 227  
[s.lloydwilliams@vrc.net.au](mailto:s.lloydwilliams@vrc.net.au)

Bridget Marcou  
Managing Partner, Wrights  
+61 407 846 672  
[bmarcou@wrights.com.au](mailto:bmarcou@wrights.com.au)