

# PRESS RELEASE

## “Looking Back and Thinking Forward” – Celebrating a new millennium for all ages.

**Friday 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999 10am to 3pm**  
*Treasury Gardens – cnr Spring & Flinders Street Melbourne*

This New Year's Eve has created a festive pandemonium none of us could have predicted, or encountered before. Was this much fuss being made in December 1899? One is faced with a massive array of choices, many of which involve paying hundreds to thousands of dollars to revel in the New Year with a cast of strangers at big hotels. These major hotels have gone to extravagant lengths to attract a clientele willing to hand over amounts of money that could alternatively purchase a car, or at least a great stereo - just for a booze-up. But, as the major Melbourne venues are finding, the desire to spend enormous amounts of money on a swish party is being over-run by the desire to spend *no* money. The expectation that Melburnians want to wear dinner suits and get very inebriated has been over-riden by the fact most hope to wear what they always wear, and maybe have a sip of champagne at midnight.

Most Melburnians, according to surveys, plan to spend New Year's Eve at home... with friends... for free!

In amongst this corporate millennium frenzy, the City of Melbourne have put together a spectacular party in its own right, with some of the most amazing Melbourne talent on offer – and yes, its free... its safe, and most importantly, *its during the daytime*. This is *not* the drunken new year binge we are told we have to have, this is a festive and warm celebration of the new year for all ages in an alcohol free, first aid, slip slop slap environment.

Melbourne luminaries such as Johnny Young and his band, Dennis Walter and Les Ms are to be joined by such diverse acts as the Maori *Te Ruawhenua* performing the ferocious haka, the percussion fury of the Vietnamese Dragon and a special opening by the Warrundjeri Tribe Elder.

One of the star attractions will be arabic speaking dancer Helen Salem. She will be accompanied by musicians in presenting the rich sounds and exocitic movement from the warm sands and tropical waters of North\_East Brazil. The group is called “Cinq e Meia” and comprises of some of Melbourne's finest vocalists, percussionists, and movement artists.

Set amongst the aesthetic beauty of the Treasury Gardens (Melbourne's most under-rated park), the event is to be opened by the Lord Mayor, Cr Peter Costigan who will pay special tribute to **The International Year of Older Persons**.

Acts will appear on three separate stages from 10am until 3pm, plus roving performers will provide colour and excitement throughout the event. Workshops are available for all ages – including Roscoe's Circus Skills and even a line dancing class! An animal farm will also be on display for the kids (and the kids at heart), along with a multitude of food stalls, information tents and of course – the music on the stages.

From Greece to Africa, from big bands to kid's bands, from clogging classes to Dennis Walter himself, this event may indeed become the defining celebration for more Melburnians than most of the hotels would expect.

**For more information, call 9310 7735**