

Nation's premier arts precinct closer to reality

The transformation of Pier 2/3 at Walsh Bay into Australia's premier arts and cultural precinct is a step closer with the NSW Government today announcing a shortlist of organisations to be potentially located at the iconic finger wharf.

Minister for the Arts, George Souris, said the multi-million dollar refurbishment of Pier 2/3 will complete the creation of Walsh Bay into a major arts and cultural precinct for Sydney and NSW.

"Walsh Bay is already a significant arts and cultural hub with major groups such as Sydney Theatre Company, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australian Theatre for Young People and Sydney Dance Company housed there," Mr Souris said.

"Refurbishment of Pier 2/3 for cultural purposes will also enhance Walsh Bay's via-

bility as a vibrant tourist, commercial, residential and business district.

"Earlier this year the NSW Government called for registrations of interest from not-for-profit arts organisations for long-term uses of the pier for arts, creative and cultural purposes.

"Today I announce a shortlist of six organisations with whom Arts NSW will now enter into the next stage of discussions as potential residents and key users of the pier:

- ✓ Australian Chamber Orchestra
- ✓ Australian Theatre for Young People
- ✓ Bangarra Dance Theatre
- ✓ Bell Shakespeare
- ✓ Sydney Writers' Festival
- ✓ The Biennale of Sydney.

"These are truly world-class organisations and their talent, creativity and commitment to the arts and culture will bring this historic facility to life.

"Arts NSW received registrations of interest from 24 organisations, which were assessed against published criteria, with six organisations shortlisted for further discussions.

"The shortlisted organisations are of a national standard, able to attract significant audiences, provide opportunities for public access and participation, and contribute to the ongoing costs associated with the pier."

Mr Souris said the final shape of the refurbished pier will be determined following the outcomes of the discussions with shortlisted organisations.

"We will be focusing on maximising the benefits of this magnificent space by striking the right mix and most appropriate uses of the pier to enhance the vibrancy of Walsh Bay as Sydney's arts and cultural precinct."

Mr Souris also announced that the NSW Government would lodge a development application with the City of Sydney seeking approval for a range of short-term creative uses of Pier 2/3.

He said the DA would streamline planning consent arrangements and encourage greater use of the historic facility for arts and culture.

"The DA prepared by Arts NSW seeks a blanket approval for short-term arts and cultural activities at Pier 2/3 for up to three years, while we finalise the long term development plans," Mr Souris said.

"This process will remove the need for individual arts organisations to seek council approval each time they want to use it.

"The range of cultural uses covered includes performances, rehearsals, art exhibitions, filming, and even fundraising activities. The DA also sets operating hours and limits on the number of people.

"Arts NSW is also developing a venue hire policy with fees varying depending on the organisation and use. Not-for-profit arts organisations would be charged subsidised fees while other businesses would pay commercial hire rates.

"Revenue will be used for the management and operation of the pier.

"The NSW Government is committed to supporting a vibrant arts and cultural sector and this exciting project will only enhance Sydney's reputation as the creative capital of Australia."

Sydney Announced Host City of The Australian Open Grand Prix Gold

The Badminton Australian Open Grand Prix Gold, successfully conducted for the past three years in Melbourne, is to be moved to Sydney's Darling Harbour from 2012.

With seven days of world-class badminton action, the Australian Open Grand Prix Gold offers US\$120,000 in prize money, attracting nearly 300 players from 25 countries in 2011. NSW Major Events Minister George Souris said Sydney was the natural choice to help build badminton's rapidly increasing profile in both Australia and across the Asia Pacific.

"Today there are over 150,000 Australians that play badminton, and player numbers are growing rapidly every year," Mr Souris said.

"For a sport truly on the rise, increasingly recognised by growing government and corporate support, Australia's global city is the natural choice for a marquee event such as this.

"With immense popularity in many countries including those in the Asian region, it will have a readymade fan base across the community and in neighbouring Chinatown.

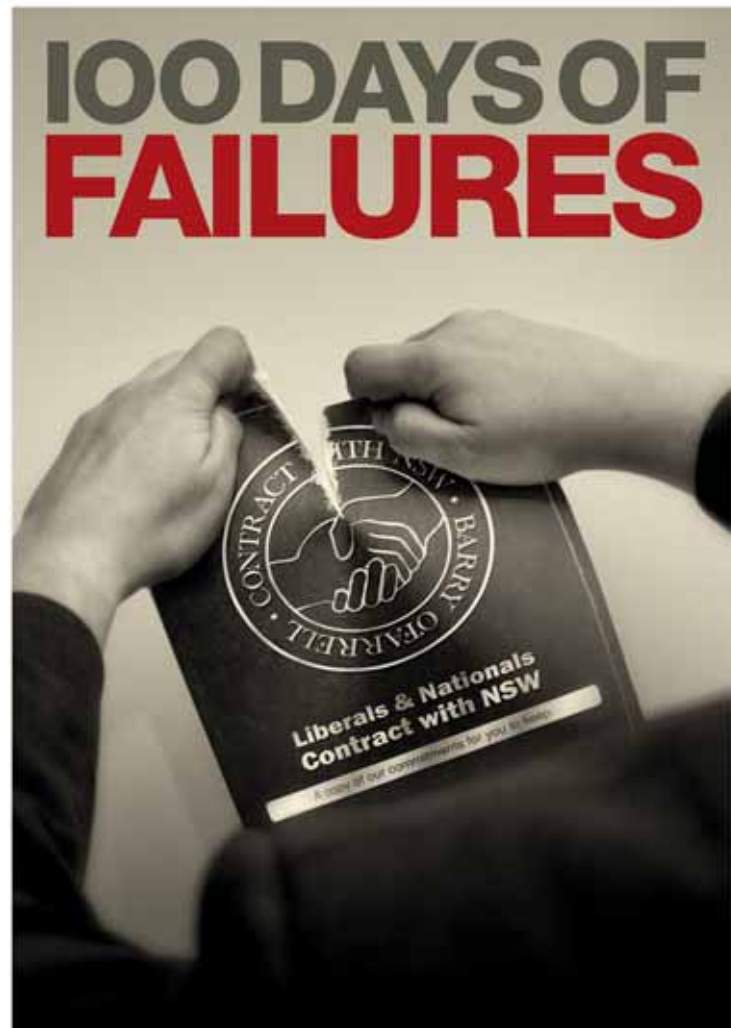
"Taking the Australian Open - Grand Prix Gold to another level in Sydney in the coming years can only help in assisting the sports' ongoing growth in numbers and stature.

"It will provide the opportunity to reach a broader national and international market, and showcase Sydney to countries in neighbouring Asia, many of which are Australia's most prospective tourism markets.

"The decision by Badminton Australia is possible because of the significant support offered by Events NSW, on behalf of the NSW Government.

"Badminton Australia looks forward to working with Events NSW to build the quality and status of the Event," Mr Brettell said.

The Event will be held from 2-8 April, 2012 at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour.



NSW OPPOSITION LEADER

100 DAYS OF FAILURES

Premier O'Farrell has spent his first 100 days in Government doing everything he said he wouldn't – attacking worker rights, proposing retrospective legislation and avoiding independent scrutiny.

Opposition Leader John Robertson marked the Government's first 100 days at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital with nurses whose wages and conditions are under threat from the Premier's unprecedented workplace laws.

"It has been 100 days of failures from the O'Farrell Government," Opposition Leader John Robertson said.

"The Premier has failed to deliver on the basic promises he made in his contract with NSW families.

"The O'Farrell Government spent its first 100 days attacking public sector worker's rights, making retrospective changes to the solar bonus scheme and failing to deliver on the Premier's promises of transparency and accountability.

"Despite promising to lead an open and accountable Government, the Premier has arrogantly tried to use every trick in the book to avoid independent scrutiny on public sector wages, his fictional budget black hole and the solar bonus scheme figures.

"Instead of acting on promises to address the cost of living, the new Government passed an 18 per cent increase in electricity prices onto families and won't begin new family energy rebate payments until July 2012.

"Barry O'Farrell set the bar so low in his 100 Day Action Plan it's no surprise he was able to meet most of his targets.

"Of the 39 tasks in the 100 Day Plan, 22 were to set up a taskforce, introduce legislation, make a political appointment or start a review.

"At the end of the day, most of the targets in Barry O'Farrell's 100 Day Plan required the Premier or Minister to hand a piece of paper to a bureaucrat.

"Mr O'Farrell should not be impressed with the fact he has managed to appoint a Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy – all that required was for the Premier to close his eyes, spin around and point at one of his MPs."

In addition to lying about public sector workers, solar bonus scheme contracts and a transparent era of Government, the Premier's broken promises from the 100 Day Plan include:

- ✗ Failing to enact campaign finance reform legislation;
- ✗ Failing to begin implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan;
- ✗ Failing to progress with negotiations on the M5 widening; and
- ✗ Failing to appoint a Small Business Commissioner.