



MEDIA RELEASE

SOLOMON ISLANDS' DANCE GROUPS TO PERFORM AT BIGGEST EVER ROYAL EDINBURGH MILITARY TATTOO IN AUSTRALIA

- Fula'aro and Faeni will appear at the ANZ Stadium in Sydney for four shows

Two traditional dance groups from the Solomon Islands will arrive in Sydney this week for The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo's Australia return which takes place at the ANZ Stadium between 17-19 October.

Hailing from the Northern region of the Malaita Province, an all-male panpipe group, Fula'aro, and 23 female performers from the Faeni dance group will amaze audiences with their colourful performance, showcasing the rich and iconic musical heritage of the islands. As the males play the enchanting music of the panpipe flutes, the female dancers will dance across the stage wearing costumes adorned with traditional shell money.

Amongst the performers is Ian Paul Hunahau, known artistically as Hi'ona, who is one of the most highly regarded masters of the panpipe flute instrument in Solomon Islands.

Both groups have performed at festivals around the world, bringing the joy of panpipe and dance to international audiences.

The team from the Solomon Islands will join the other Pacific nations for an extraordinary 6-minute-performance entitled '*Our Ocean People*' featuring the drums, percussion and dancers from each of the island groups - in total more than 350 performers from more than 7 Pacific nations.

Under the theme 'At All Points of the Compass', the show will take guests on a tour of the world, guiding them around 360 degrees of the atlas to tell the compelling tale of Australia's place in history and its links with allies and friends, including the Solomon Islands.

To celebrate this theme, the Australian show will take the audience on a circular tour around an imaginary compass rose with its centre at the dusty red heart of the continent - at Lambert Centre. For thousands of years, the indigenous people of Australia navigated their 'country' using 'songlines' - an oral tradition of routes travelled - and with this notion as inspiration, five 'song men' will guide the audience to the edge of traditional lands, welcoming each international group to perform in turn.

The concept reinforces the purpose of the Tattoo in helping bring people together, to better understand each other's cultures and ways of life to "arrive as strangers and leave as friends".

The Tattoo returns to Australia with production partners, the Michael Cassel Group, as part of its ambitious Strategy for Growth. Announced in 2018, the ambitious growth programme includes doubling its turnover to £20 million by 2025 as well as additional signposted overseas tours to Canada and China by 2021. Work is already underway with the business in regular conversations with the UK, Scottish and International Governments, local promoters and support networks.

Brigadier David Allfrey MBE, Chief Executive and Producer at the Tattoo, said: “We are proud and privileged to bring - in equal measure - the heritage and innovation of the Tattoo to our Australian audiences and are thrilled that the Solomon Islands are able to join the line-up. Not only do our nations have a wonderful shared history but also, we know well the richness of Solomon Islander culture, music and the long connections with the United Kingdom and Australia. The military and cultural performers will perform alongside the other Pacific nations who are taking part. Above all though the Solomon Islands performers will make their own special impact across the span of the Show.”

“We return to Australia as part of a new period of growth for the Tattoo. This is an exciting step change for us reaching anew across the world, first to Australia, then over the next two years to China and North America. The Tattoo is all about bringing people together to reinforce relationships already made and making new friends for the future.”

Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell said he was pleased to see Australia once again hosting this world famous event and welcomed all participants to Australia.

“The largest ever Tattoo in Sydney will present an international cast of talented performers from around the world. It is a unique celebration of music and military tradition in a colourful display of music, dance and military precision.

“Participation in the Tattoo allows Australia to demonstrate the professional skills and high performance of our armed forces,” General Campbell said.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has provided a range of ceremonial and logistic support to the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo including more than 250 cast members, air and ground transport and co-ordination for participating nations.

“I am delighted that the ADF will once again be part of this world-class event,”

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For further information, please contact the Tattoo team at Stripe Communications on edinburghtattoo@stripecommunications.com or 0131 561 8628.

Notes to editors

About The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

- The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo first performed in 1950 and is in its 69th year. The event has sold out for the last 21 consecutive years
- The Tattoo is performed to a live audience of 220,000 annually on the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle with a further global TV audience of +100M. Performers from over 50 countries have taken part
- In 2010, the event was renamed The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo after Her Majesty The Queen bestowed the Royal title in honour of its 60th birthday
- HRH The Princess Royal, Princess Anne, is the Patron of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo
- The Tattoo has donated over £12million to Services and Arts organisations since 1950 from The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo (Charities) Limited - its charitable company
- The Tattoo generates £77million annually for the Scottish economy with a further £30million GBP in FTE
- In 2018, the Tattoo revealed its intent to continue the company's growth through an ambitious international expansion programme including visits to Australia, Canada and China and doubling turn-over to £20million by 2025
- The Tattoo has performed overseas on four occasions, most recently Australia and New Zealand in February 2016. Over 240,000 tickets were sold and the shows delivered a combined estimate of £50million gross economic impact to the cities of Melbourne and Wellington.
- In 2019 The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo will celebrate its 70th year.
- <https://www.edintattoo.co.uk/>