

**A spectacular outdoor theatre event performed by hundreds of people is set to take place in Albury/Wodonga on the evening of Saturday 19 June.** Murray Arts' second annual community celebration of the Murray River, *Enchanted River*, features lanterns, giant performance puppets, shadow puppets, masks, stilt walking, acrobatics, fire twirling, Aboriginal dance, flag dancing and fire drawings.

# enchanted

## A project with flow



**THE PERFORMANCE STARTS AT SUNSET IN AN AMPHITHEATRE on Gateway Island in Wodonga with the lighting of hundreds of lanterns and the gathering of beives of winged river insects on stilts and giant aquatic river life figures. To the sounds of a percussion band and massed singing, a great procession will then make its way along the picturesque river track, through ephemeral sculptural installations past artworks inspired by the river and shadow plays of river eco-relationships.**

The travelling show then stops at a performance site on the banks of the Murray at Noreuil Park in Albury, where the dramatic story of *Enchanted River* is told in a sensory explosion of music, fire, theatre, circus and fire art. The performance includes large scale lighting and visual effects and an original soundtrack commissioned from Melbourne composer Michael Havir.

*Enchanted River* is the result of months of work by a unique team of artists, scientists and CCD workers with the local community. Environmental scientist, Geoff Edney, has been introducing live river creatives – yabbies, river crays, fish and insects – to hundreds of young students in workshops at local schools and colleges. A special *Enchanted River* education kit and CD-ROM has been produced which includes a story about the adventures of river creatures, fabulous colour photographs and comprehensive information about the river habitat, water quality and eco system.

Albury and Wodonga TAFE, councils, environmental organisations, neighbourhood centres, youth groups, senior citizens' groups and individual members of the community have been involved in the project, as well as local arts and cultural industry organisations, including the Flying Fruit Fly Circus.

Artistic Director, Annie Edney and Performance and Production Artist, Tim Monley, have been working with a diverse range of individuals in the Enchanted Studio to create the lanterns, puppets, fire installations and other art and performance works that make up the show. The project is based on the premise that participatory arts encourages personal development as well as social cohesion. Celebrating the life of the Murray River through arts participation is a way of lightening some of the heavy concerns with environmental issues. The community and cultural aspects of the project develop awareness and appreciation, social connections and skills development. The process has encouraged groups to work together to express a shared identity and culture – and to find a unique way to celebrate that.

The theme for this year's *Enchanted River* is FLOW, and the community has embraced the concept. An art exhibition on the theme has been developed to showcase local art works and bring together artists practicing in different disciplines who would not normally exhibit together. *Enchanted River Flow* will be on show in Creator's Artspace from June 11 to 26. It reflects a wide range of interpretations about the River; from flows of water and life, flows of knowledge and creativity to the flow of community spirit as people come together again to celebrate their river.

Once again *Enchanted River* has brought the community together with accessible participatory art, learning about and celebrating the precious resource of the Murray River and its catchment area. And with the level of skills development and awareness raising the project has achieved, we're certain it will continue to flow. ■

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## August

21 August

 *Bush Poets Soiree* Humorous and entertaining bush poetry, yarns, storytelling and music by talented entertainers and their mates. The **BOWRAVILLE** Theatre. Contact Dorothy Tel 02 6564 7828 or Maureen Tel 02 6568 5269

21 August

 *South West Arts 21st Birthday*  
**BOORROORBAN** Pub. Tel 02 6993 2010  
Email [twentyone@southwestarts.com.au](mailto:twentyone@southwestarts.com.au)

22 August

 *Songs of Love & War* by Claudio Monteverdi. The most musically combative view on the most amorous of all battles - the battle of the sexes. Presented by The Song Company. Wentworth Falls School of Arts **WENTWORTH FALLS**. Tel 02 9351 7939

26 August - 3 October

 *Re:Cycle: 3rd Tweed Wood Biennial*  
Twenty-five of Australia's most accomplished wood artists contributing work made from recycled materials only. **TWEED RIVER** Art Gallery. Tel 02 6670 2790 Email [tweedart@tweed.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tweedart@tweed.nsw.gov.au)  
Website [www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/artgallery](http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/artgallery)