

# MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGO: 22 APRIL 2008



MACQUARIE

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## A FEAST OF IDEAS AT THE 2008 NOOSA LONGWEEKEND

**The Noosa Longweekend has a Forum program in 2008 to ignite the hearts and minds of festival goers, with plenty of opportunity to be engaged in discussion and debate with key commentators and thinkers on major issues and concerns.**

“We’re really proud to have put together such an impressive program to present ideas and promote public debate about a broad range of topics that shape and enrich our lives, and challenge our times,” said Gail Hewton, Festival General Manager.

Just some of the issues include climate change, water and dams, what the USA election means to Australia, the nature of happiness, anti-terror and sedition laws, the need for adventure, the pull of the desert, what makes Queenslanders different, the power of journalism, and the Asian voice in Australian literature.

Now in its seventh year, The Noosa Longweekend festival runs during school holidays from 4 to 13 July, with tickets available from 28 April. It will offer up ten fantastic fun-filled days and nights with more than 220 performances and activities across theatre, literature, music, dance, forum, film, art and cuisine in the breathtaking setting that is Noosa.

Climate change is now a given – sea levels are rising. So as a festival in a low-lying coastal town we offer *People on the Move: Dealing with Climate Change* to consider how we prepare for the permanent displacement of millions of people from low-lying regions. Presented with Green Cross Australia – the environment protection organisation created by former USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev - we have a panel including Green Cross Australia CEO Mara Bun; science writer Wilson da Silva; insurer Tony Coleman; prominent QC Julian Burnside; John Cherry from the Queensland Farmers’ Federation and CSIRO director Andrew Ash as a set of cool heads to look at the social, scientific, insurance, legal, rural and environment issues related to this hot topic.

The Queensland government’s decision to dam the Mary River for the contentious Traveston Dam is cited as part of South-East Queensland’s water supply solutions. In *Cities on the Edge*, we have Peter Thompson moderating a lively discussion on competing theories and solutions caused by the building pressures on our urban transport systems, housing, power and water supply, including Traveston Dam’s role, which are highlighted in the Griffith REVIEW’s May edition, with editor Dr Julianne Schultz; leading urban planner Brendan Gleeson; journalist Peter Meredith; and Professor Ian Lowe, President of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

Voted as one of the “must-see” events last year, Barrie Cassidy’s *Insiders* returns with a special focus on the 2008 USA Presidential election. The likely outcome of this fiercely fought election and its global implications will be discussed by a stellar panel of analysts including Stephen Loosley, former Senator and Chairman of the Australian Parliament’s Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs; journalist and author Paul Kelly of *The Australian*; US-born Bruce Wolpe, head of corporate affairs with the Fairfax organisation; and Dennis Atkins journalist with *The Courier-Mail*.

**THE NOOSA LONGWEEKEND** Suite 13, 10 Arcadia Walk, Noosa Junction P.O. Box 2200, Noosa Heads 4567  
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Everyone wants to be happy. But what is happiness? We have the ABC's Geraldine Doogue teasing out *Happiness* and its causes with an expert panel including Gordon Parker, psychiatrist and Executive Director of the Black Dog Institute; Stephanie Dowrick, psychotherapist and bestselling author; Warren Brown, Sydney Daily Telegraph cartoonist; Kate Fitzpatrick, actor, raconteur, author and essayist; and Kathleen Noonan, The Courier-Mail journalist and features writer. What emerges will be thought-provoking and entertaining.

We have a lively and provocative event with author and journalist David Marr moderating *Australia's Eroding Freedoms?*. Four observers of social justice enter the fray to look at terrorism and our sedition laws from many angles: Julian Burnside QC, noted barrister and human rights advocate; Leigh Sales, author of *Detainee OO2*; Hedley Thomas, former journalist with The Australian and five times Walkley award Winner; and George Williams, Professor of Public Law at the University of NSW and author of *What Price Security? - Taking Stock of Australia's Anti-terror Laws*.

Working out just what it's like to live in search of the next adventure can be well-explained by adventurer Robyn Davidson, who is widely remembered for having crossed the desert by camel 30 years ago. In *A Wandering Life* Griffith REVIEW editor Dr Julianne Schultz will explore with Robyn her adventurous life and what gives her the spirit to chase each new adventure.

Other events to engage, enrage, entertain and enliven festival goers are:

- In *Sexy Numbers*, statistician, commentator and author Professor John Croucher compares Queensland with the rest of Australia and the world – through statistics!
- In *The Asian Inspiration*, Caroline Baum will explore the new Asian voice to Australian literature with Christopher Koch, (*The Year of Living Dangerously*, *Highways to a War* and *The Memory Room*), Blanche d'Alpuget (*Monkeys in the Dark* and *Turtle Beach*) and Alice Pung (*Unpolished Gem*), with Melbourne University Press publisher Louise Adler.
- *A Desert Affair* has modern-day nomads, Robyn Davidson, John Wolseley and Kim Mahood discussing the thrall our deserts hold for them.
- In *Boganville: A time less glamorous* well known actress Kate Fitzpatrick takes us to a less glamorous year she spent in the outer burbs of the Gold Coast.
- In *The Power of Journalism* Peter Thompson takes us for a behind-the-scenes look into the rigours of investigative reporting and the power of 'new journalism', with award winning journalists Hedley Thomas and Leigh Sales.

To request a program visit [www.noosalongweekend.com](http://www.noosalongweekend.com) email [info@noosalongweekend.com](mailto:info@noosalongweekend.com) or phone 07 5474 9941. For bookings please call The J box office on 07 5455 4455, or visit at 60 Noosa Drive, Noosa Junction or check out [www.noosalongweekend.com](http://www.noosalongweekend.com) from 28 April.

For media inquiries, including photos and footage, further press releases and interviews with artists contact:

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- Sunshine Coast media can contact local media managers Casey McNeil, 07 5446 6945 / 0402 993 688 [casey@macneilmarketing.com.au](mailto:casey@macneilmarketing.com.au) or Angela Takats on 0422 933 198 [angela@macneilmarketing.com.au](mailto:angela@macneilmarketing.com.au)

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