

# BRISBANE FESTIVAL

## Media Release

**EMBARGOED until 9am Friday 7 May**

### **MESSENGERS OF BRISBANE SPREAD THEIR WINGS FOR A HISTORY-MAKING TOUR OF REGIONAL QUEENSLAND**

Look up and smile when Brisbane Festival's vibrant **Messengers of Brisbane** public art installation spreads its wings and embarks on a flying six-week tour of regional Queensland this winter.

Landing as *Messengers of Mackay*, *Messengers of Townsville* and *Messengers of Blackall/Tambo*, the work will see giant Gouldian finches in party hats, created by internationally renowned visual artist **Florentijn Hofman**, bring hope, joy and art to communities across Queensland.

Covering 3,300km, *Messengers of Brisbane* is a ground-breaking opportunity allowing a much-loved part of the Brisbane Festival to visit regional Queensland.

The stunning work will be seen by an estimated 143,000 visitors to Townsville's North Australian Festival of Arts from **2 – 11 July**, the Mackay Festival of Arts from **18 – 26 July** and Better in Blackall festival hubs in Blackall and Tambo from **17 – 23 August**.

The larger-than-life installations will be perched atop iconic landmarks and public spaces to inject a sense of fun and encourage visitors to explore each community.

In addition to viewing the beautiful giant finches, young people and their families can participate in a range of free workshops to create their own artwork and learn more about this endangered species.

The work made its world premiere at Brisbane Festival in 2020 when **Brisbane Festival Artistic Director Louise Bezzina** commissioned the colourful *Messengers of Brisbane* installation as a beacon of hope for the city following an extended COVID-19 lockdown.

*"These giant Gouldian finches are glorious visual reminders to look up and smile, to experience a moment of joy and to celebrate,"* Ms Bezzina said.

*"The 'Messengers' will not only inspire and invigorate regional communities but will help bring local and interstate visitors to regions that are emerging from the interruptions of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.*

*"I am delighted at the incredible support and assistance that Tourism and Events Queensland, Mackay Regional Council, Blackall-Tambo Regional Council and Townsville City Council have given to help us tour this magnificent and joyous public artwork.*

*"Fittingly, the Messengers will wrap up their regional tour just before Brisbane Festival returns from **3 – 25 September 2021.**"*



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**Minister for Tourism Stirling Hinchliffe** said the Brisbane Festival's *Messengers of Brisbane* tour would provide a welcome boost to tourism in North and Outback Queensland communities.

*"What better way to bring people together and encourage visitors to Queensland's regions than through this recognisable public art installation which was positively received and celebrated during the 2020 Brisbane Festival," Mr Hinchliffe said.*

*"Regional towns rely on events like the Messengers of Brisbane to boost their local tourism economies by drawing travellers who spend on accommodation, transport, at restaurants, cafes, tourism attractions and other local businesses.*

*"We hope this art installation will also inspire people in these regional areas to consider a trek to the state's capital to experience the wonder of the 2021 Brisbane Festival come September.*

*"Queenslanders' strong response to COVID-19 is the reason we're able to hold this year's Brisbane Festival and the Messengers of Brisbane tour throughout the state.*

*"These events add to our blockbuster It's Live! in Queensland events calendar, which is expected to deliver \$215 million for the state's economy in the first half of 2021."*

Gouldian finches, also known as rainbow finches, are native to Australia and recognisable by their vivid feathers and bright colours.

The giant sculptures symbolise freedom and the fragility of Australia's natural environment while offering hope to Queensland for brighter days to come.

Based in The Netherlands, Mr Hofman worked with Brisbane's UAP (Urban Art Projects) to bring his concept and designs to life for the major commission.

*"This work breathes hope for better days. It symbolises celebrating life and being positive.... especially during this period," the artist said.*

This project is an original commission by Brisbane Festival, supported through the Giving Program by Tim Fairfax AC and Gina Fairfax.

The Queensland Government, through Arts Queensland and Tourism and Events Queensland, is proud to support Brisbane Festival, which features on the *It's Live! in Queensland* events calendar.

Brisbane Festival returns in 2021 to fill the city with art, music and joy from **3 – 25 September 2021**.

For Brisbane Festival program announcements, visit [brisbanefestival.com.au](http://brisbanefestival.com.au) or follow Brisbane Festival on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

**ENDS**

