



MEDIA RELEASE

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Rehearsals Begin for Sydney Production of *The Lion King*

Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Arts, George Souris, today joined 100 actors, singers, puppeteers, crew and technicians from the upcoming Sydney return production of *The Lion King* for their first day of rehearsals.

During the rehearsals, held at Carriageworks in Eveleigh, Mr Souris and guests enjoyed a performance of *The Lion King's* Grammy Award-winning signature song *Circle of Life*, by Elton John and Tim Rice, from principal and ensemble cast members.

"I'm delighted to join the cast and crew of *The Lion King* for the first day of rehearsals, an exciting milestone in bringing this globally successful musical back for its Australian premiere to Sydney and NSW," Minister Souris said.

"Destination NSW estimates that based on an anticipated eight-month run, *The Lion King* will generate almost half a million ticket sales and attract about 50,000 interstate and international patrons and these visitors alone will inject at least \$28 million into the NSW economy. The Disney organisation estimates the cumulative economic impact to NSW is about \$100 million".

"It has been almost a decade since *The Lion King* premiered in Australia at Sydney's Capitol Theatre and I am pleased that, thanks to the support from the NSW Government, it will return to this world-class venue on 12 December for another highly-anticipated season".

The Lion King is one of the world's most popular stage musicals, with more than 68 million people around the world having enjoyed the show since its Broadway premiere in 1997. It is the winner of over 70 major international awards including six 1998 Tony Awards and a GRAMMY Award for Best Musical Show Album.

"This will be our home grown version of the highest-grossing stage show in the world, showcasing a great range of local and international talent," Mr Souris said.

"This show will be one of the biggest productions in Sydney with the benefits for NSW tourism and for cementing our position as Australia's major events capital clear.

The Lion King celebrates a new milestone when it returns to Sydney in December, making it the tenth worldwide production of *The Lion King*, the highest number of concurrently running productions in the show's history.

Tickets for *The Lion King* are now on sale through Ticketmaster and wotif.com.