



# Andrew Stoner MP Deputy Premier of NSW Minister for Tourism & Major Events

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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Wednesday 30 July 2014

### **HANDA OPERA ON SYDNEY HARBOUR RETURNS WITH AIDA**

NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism and Major Events Andrew Stoner today announced an expanded four week season of Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour featuring *Aida* from 27 March to 26 April 2015.

“Every year Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour surprises audiences with its awe-inspiring productions, and I am pleased to announce it will be returning next year,” Mr Stoner said.

“Over the last three years Opera Australia’s Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini has developed Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour into an outstanding and totally unique event, with something for everyone from first timers to life-long opera lovers.

“Set on Sydney Harbour against the striking backdrop of the Sydney Opera House, last year’s Opera Australia production of *Madama Butterfly* entertained 40,000 people with fantastic performances and a set which included the cast arriving by speed boat and a recreated magical sunrise at night.

“Since 2012 the mass appeal of Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour has attracted more than 11,300 overseas and interstate visitors, delivering \$20 million to the NSW economy,” he said.

In 2015, Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour will produce *Aida*, a tragic love story about an Egyptian commander, a Pharaoh and an enslaved Ethiopian princess. This event will be the first production in a new three year agreement between the NSW Government and Opera Australia, to stage Opera on Sydney Harbour.

Opera Australia Artistic Director, Lyndon Terracini, said: “I’m delighted to be able to share the news that *Aida* will be the opera staged in 2015 for Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour. This will be a new production, created especially for this magical outdoor venue. Gale Edwards will direct, while the very talented Mark Thompson will design the set and costume.

“*Aida* is the ultimate grand opera, and one that many people will know. I expect that with the wide appeal of this opera, and the spectacular new set and costume designs in the making, we will see an increased demand for tickets. And so, we are extending the season to four weeks to ensure Sydneysiders and visitors alike will all have the opportunity to come and enjoy this magnificent opera event in 2015.”

“I am very proud of what we have achieved in the first three years of Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour, and it's wonderful to be able to grow this in 2015 into a bigger show and a longer season,” he said.