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12 December 2008

Chinese New Year Festival - Year of the Ox to light up Sydney

"Sydney's Chinese New Year Festival will welcome the Year of the Ox with an exciting line up of events including the first ever Twilight Parade," Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP said today launching the three week program.

The City of Sydney produced Festival will run from 23 January – 15 February 2009.

"Sydney's Chinese New Year Festival is the largest celebration of the Lunar New Year outside of Asia," Ms Moore said. "The Festival will have something for everyone to enjoy, from spectacular performances to unique cultural experiences."

Parade Director Darren Yap said the inaugural **Chinese New Year Twilight Parade** on Sunday 1 February will light up downtown Sydney for a fun family night out.

"Starting at dusk, Sydney's streets will host a stunning night time procession of costumes, giant lanterns, lights and illuminated floats."

"Featuring 2,600 people, the Twilight Parade will showcase the very best local performers and 500 performers from Henan province, China, the home of the famous Shaolin Temple. This dazzling Parade is like no other," Mr Yap said.

Last year over 80,000 people watched the spectacular parade. This year's parade will be followed by a fireworks display on the harbour at Cockle Bay.

The Festival features more than 50 events including temple tours, the first ever Sydney Chinese Film Festival, art exhibitions, kids' events, history, food and cultural tours, calligraphy demonstrations, opera and banquets.

International film star and Festival Ambassador **Jackie Chan** invited Sydneysiders to enjoy the festival; "The Sydney Chinese New Year Festival is a great opportunity to celebrate Chinese culture and heritage, eat delicious food, and be entertained by talented performers. Wishing you a healthy, happy, and prosperous Year of the Ox!"

The Year of the Ox brings good natured patience combined with physical stamina to influence the year.

More than 600,000 people attend the Festival annually, making it one of Sydney's fastest growing and most popular events.

Media contacts:

Shuxia Chen (Chinese Media) 0401 628 723, schen@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Maya Catsanis (02) 9265 9553, 0409 045 425. mcatsanis@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

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