

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Creative Industries



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VISITORS CAN'T HELP FALLING IN LOVE WITH ELVIS EXHIBITION

The Andrews Labor Government is attracting more visitors to Victoria's regions, with the latest regional drawcard smashing attendance records to become the most successful exhibition ever at Bendigo Art Gallery.

Bendigo Art Gallery has welcomed more than 219,000 visitors through their doors since the sold-out *Elvis: Direct from Graceland* exhibition opened in March 2022, with more visitors expected before the magic of Elvis leaves the building this Sunday.

The box office record set by *Elvis: Direct from Graceland* beats out previous major *Bendigo International Collections* exhibitions, including *Grace Kelly: Style Icon* and *Bendigo Art Gallery and Twentieth Century Fox present Marilyn Monroe*, which attracted 152,706 and 143,222 people respectively.

Exhibitions like this deliver a huge boost for local businesses, tourism to the region, and the economy. Not including *Elvis: Direct from Graceland*, more than 400,000 people have attended *Bendigo International Collections* exhibitions – generating an economic impact of over \$40 million for Greater Bendigo.

Created in partnership with Graceland, the exhibition is exclusive to Victoria and explores the extraordinary life and style of "The King of Rock & Roll" through a dazzling display of 300 artefacts owned by Elvis.

Elvis's impressive collection of memorabilia has attracted a whole new audience to Bendigo Art Gallery with 67,000 of the attendees being first-time visitors. Approximately 86 per cent of ticket buyers have been from outside of Bendigo, with over 24,000 of those guests travelling from out-of-state to view the exhibition.

Supported by the Labor Government's Major Events Fund through Visit Victoria, *Elvis: Direct from Graceland* is part of a jam-packed calendar of major events in 2022, helping to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors and create local jobs.

Minister Dimopoulos also announced program details for another major event for the city funded by the Labor Government, the highly anticipated White Night Bendigo.

Taking over Bendigo on Saturday, 3 September, White Night Bendigo will feature captivating art activations, including two world premieres – and a host of food and music offerings throughout the city

Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport, Major Events and Creative Industries Steve Dimopoulos

"Elvis: Direct from Graceland has been a smash hit for Bendigo and for Victoria, now with the return of White Night Bendigo another blockbuster event will deliver a massive drawcard for visitors to the region and to the state."

"Victoria offers world-class experiences from across the world – there's never been a better time to jump in the car and head up the highway to rediscover everything that makes our state the cultural heartland of the nation."

Quote attributable to Director of Bendigo Art Gallery Jessica Bridgfoot

"Elvis: Direct from Graceland injected a renewed sense of excitement and energy back into our city, and we are thrilled with the way visitors, local businesses and the community at large embraced the exhibition."

Media contact: Corey Croft 0468 897 764 | corey.croft@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan

“Central Victorians love their art and culture, whether it’s blockbuster exhibitions or major events – we’re continuing to put Bendigo on the map as a major must-see cultural destination.”

Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards

“We’re continuing to attract more events to regional Victoria, supporting local businesses, creating more jobs and delivering a thriving regional economy.”