



Hopak in the Park shows the True Meaning of Cossack Dance.

Hopak in the Park has been deemed a great success and has given the Ukrainian community a wonderful opportunity to show off its talent and culture to the wider Australian community.

On Saturday April 30, 2011 the Sidney Myer Music Bowl came to light in front of an audience of close to 2000, when vibrant dancers and class musicians from all around Australia and New York demonstrated the fruitfulness and colour of the Ukrainian Spirit.

It was a true kaleidoscope of colour, vibrancy, energy and social cohesion.

The Festival initiated by the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO) brought together many ensembles from throughout Australia and overseas.

AFUO Cultural Director Taras Galas and AFUO Chairman Stefan Romaniw in their welcoming messages highlighted the aims of the festival - To strengthen the Ukrainian community and share Ukrainian culture with the broader community

The AFUO worked to deliver the following:

- Highlight Ukrainian culture to the wider Australian community and to increase the understanding of Ukraine, Ukrainian culture, Ukrainian community.
- Enable Ukrainian Australians from all corners of the country to come together to one place and be proud of their heritage.
- Motivate each other to further develop the community.

Victorian Government Ministers Matthew Guy - Minister for Planning and Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Nicholas Kotsiras, Federal Government Senator and Chairman of Australia -Ukraine Parliamentary Group Senator Catryna Bilyk welcomed the audience and acknowledged the hard work and tireless efforts of all involved to make this inaugural dance festival a success.

The event also solemnly marked the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl Disaster. The Australian Chernobyl Children's Foundation Chair Ross Merunovich spoke about the ongoing fall out of the disaster.

These defining moments reflected that the Ukrainian community in Australia is positively alive and active.

The Dance Ensembles *Rostyazhka* from Perth, *Volya* from Adelaide, *Zahrava* and *Veselka* from Sydney, *Iska* from Geelong, *Verchovyna* from Melbourne and the *Cossack Brothers* and bands *Yellow and Blue Tram* from SA and *Hrim* from NY were the true heroes of the day. The vivacious energy that came from these performances was so powerful it left the audience in a grand position to continue on to the dinner/dance which followed.

Popular New York band *Hrim*, entertained audiences until late into the night as the community gathered in high spirits to celebrate the first of which will now become an annual event.

This exhilarating event gave the Ukrainian community the opportunity to highlight its culture to the wider Australian community.



AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF UKRAINIAN ORGANISATIONS
СОЮЗ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ АВСТРАЛІЇ

Representing 22 Peak Ukrainian Organisations in Australia
Member of Ukrainian World Congress

This momentous event enabled Australian - Ukrainians from all corners of the country to come together to one central place and be proud of their heritage and motivate one another to further develop the rich and plentiful Ukrainian community.

The Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO) extends its gratitude to the organising committee, the performers, backstage crew, the men and women who cooked and worked in the kitchen, (over 5500 varenyky and tens of litres of borsch) the barmen, the sales staff and exhibitors. Over 100 people collaborated to bring to life *Hopak in the Park* 2011.

Events like Hopak in the Park give the Ukrainian community the opportunity to show off our talent to the wider Australian community as well as attract many of our people. Regardless of age, gender or culture everyone enjoyed the show.

What next? AFUO is already taking steps to further strengthen our Ukrainian brand and identity. It is preparing for *Hopak in the Park* 2012!

Thank you all! Let's be proud of our Ukrainian origin and feel good about ourselves, that we are an exemplary and active community within the Australian society.