



Media release

23 June, 2001

### Meeting to demonstrate support for the Espy

Representatives from the music industry will meet with the Esplanade Alliance at the Esplanade Hotel, St Kilda on **Sunday, 24 June at 1:00 pm** in support of the Espy's continuing evolution as an incubator of new, experimental and alternative cultural activities.

Ms Kate Shaw, spokesperson for the Esplanade Alliance and founding director of the Esplanade Hotel Foundation Ltd, said that in the right hands, there is now scope to forge a dynamic space for original live music and generally for innovation and creativity across the arts and community sectors.

"The sale of the Espy presents a tremendous opportunity for a new owner to reinvigorate one of Melbourne's most important live music venues and prospective buyers should be aware of community desires before committing millions of dollars," Ms Shaw said.

"In the wrong hands, another of Melbourne's vibrant live music venues could disappear and that is why the Esplanade Alliance is compelled to participate in the sale process," she said.

The tender bid will be made by Esplanade Hotel Foundation Ltd, a new not-for-profit company, which has been established by the Esplanade Alliance to encourage and promote live music, performing arts, visual arts, design, film, video, television, radio or other cultural activities at the Espy.

"The meeting on Sunday will confirm community desires and mobilise support behind a bid that will ensure the Espy's survival," Ms Shaw said.

“Our concept is to create and sustain a powerhouse of new, experimental, alternative live music, comedy and arts at the Espy that will meet the needs of communities across Melbourne and bring together the quintessential qualities that give St Kilda its uniqueness, vibrancy and authenticity.

“We envisage a mix of performance space, studios and offices for a range of cultural projects and organisations on the upper levels, complementing the rawness and true cutting edge that the current Espy nurtures on the ground level.

“For the Espy to remain an icon in Melbourne’s musical landscape it is crucial to ensure there is a synergy of activity across the whole building,” she said.

The Esplanade Hotel Foundation is currently negotiating with reputable commercial operators and various community and cultural organisations to prepare its bid.

The ownership and management model proposed by the Esplanade Hotel Foundation is a rather unique private/public joint venture model. It allows for private operators to still meet their profit goals and for public funding from donations and grants to be used to encourage community cultural activities.

The Esplanade Hotel Foundation is prepared to secure tenancies for the upper floors and to take the risk of fundraising for capital works, on the condition that a sympathetic ground floor operator continues the Espy’s cultural role as a vehicle for the on-going evolution of affordable, leading edge music, comedy and art.

“We can do this with community interest and support,” Ms Shaw said

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**For further media information please contact  
Krystyna Kynst**



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Krystyna Kynst  
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