



## THE COUNTDOWN IS ON FOR CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT IN 2020

With only 50 days until Christmas Eve, the countdown is on for Vision Australia's beloved Carols by Candlelight from the Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

The event is working closely with broadcast partner, Channel Nine, to produce a magical Carols by Candlelight from the Bowl stage for the millions of people who tune in from around the country.

A significant part of Australia's Christmas tradition, this year the event will look a little different with no audience on site due to public health considerations.

After working with our stakeholders on the possible options for this year's event, and using the most up to date public health advice available, Vision Australia has taken the tough decision to change the way this event comes to life.

Vision Australia CEO Ron Hooton understands Carols by Candlelight is an event near and dear to so many Australians, but having a healthy and COVID-free Christmas remains the top priority, as well as the safety of the public, its staff and the many volunteers who support the event.

'In our 83 years this is the only time we've had to do this so it's with the utmost disappointment that we've had to make this decision,' Mr Hooton said.

'While everyone involved would have loved to have had a crowd this year at Carols by Candlelight, we do urge our loyal fans to still be part of the big night with their family and friends from the comfort of their lounge rooms or backyards.'

Vision Australia's Carols by Candlelight in Melbourne always attracts Australia's music theatre's brightest stars and this year is no exception. Audiences are encouraged to deck their living rooms with tinsel, leave out some biscuits for Santa, a carrot for Rudolph, and settle in front of the TV to sing along with the star-studded line-up who will grace the Sidney Myer Music Bowl stage.

Mr Hooton said, 'Vision Australia's Carols by Candlelight is a time for everyone to come together and celebrate, but also to raise money to help children who are blind or have low vision to live the life they choose.'

'Next year, we look forward to welcoming back the thousands of people who make the annual pilgrimage to the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, enjoying Christmas Eve together again under candlelit skies,' said Mr Hooton.

Channel Nine's Director of Television, Michael Healy said, 'In a year like no other, our broadcast of this year's Carols by Candlelight will be more special than ever before. Viewers can hope to see all their favourite Carols stars they've come to expect as well as some exciting new faces bringing you a magical performance of the sounds of Christmas.'

'For all those who usually attend the event in person, we encourage you to tune in to Channel Nine and enjoy what we know is going to be another wonderful Christmas Eve Carols performed by a roll call of Australia's best artists.'

Arts Centre Melbourne CEO, Claire Spencer AM said, 'Carols at the iconic Sidney Myer Music Bowl is a cherished Melbourne tradition. As a long standing partner of Vision Australia's Carols by Candlelight, Arts Centre Melbourne would have dearly loved to have welcomed a live audience to the Bowl as a powerful and positive symbol of Melbourne's recovery. We are respectful of the decision and will continue to work closely with Channel 9 to ensure an amazing Christmas spectacle.'

The full line-up will be announced closer to the event.

**VISION AUSTRALIA'S CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT:**

**When:** Thursday 24 December

**Broadcast details:** Channel 9 will broadcast the whole show live from 8pm AEST on Christmas Eve, as well as a replay on Christmas Day. 3AW will broadcast live from 6pm until midnight on Christmas Eve.

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