

## Festival of W line-up announced as destination winter event returns this July

A major visual and sound experience lighting up land and water locations in the heart of Wagga Wagga's cultural precinct will be the main attraction of this year's Festival of W event.

Featuring thousands of lights, the immersive visual experience will be "light no other" seen in Wagga Wagga or regional NSW before, and is being curated by renowned Australian light art and visual design artists Mandylights.

Complementing the light and sound show at the destination winter event will be a pop-up dining hub, entertainment and installations by local and national artists, the return of the popular outdoor ice rink and more.

Destination & Events Coordinator Kimberly Parker said this year's 16-day festival, running from 1 July – 16 July, offers a full program with something to enjoy day and night.

"Festival of W, now in its second year, is about embracing and showcasing our city and region during the winter months, and this year's program certainly delivers on this," Ms Parker said.

"We're so excited for audiences to witness the major drawcard light and sound experience, which has been inspired by our city's natural environments, Wiradjuri culture and community stories. The immersive land and on-water light show will play from dusk to late each evening of the festival.

"Also coming to the festival this year is House of FoW – a cosy pop-up food and drink space showcasing local food offerings, fire buckets, live music, seating and heaters.

"House of FoW will be the perfect starting point for your festival experience, or, wander the festival, have an ice skate and then end the evening here with a fireside night cap.

"We have a free, one-night-only special live music on Saturday 8 July, with a line-up including Australian artists Sycco, Hatchie, Tom Snowdon, Muesli the band and Wagga Wagga-based DJ Vino and Vinyl."

The Festival of W program has been curated over the past 12 months, including listening to feedback from festival-goers last year.

Elements of the festival will also celebrate 2023 NAIDOC week, which will occur during the 16-day festival. Wiradjuri and First Nations programming has been included throughout the festival and will be experienced through art, performance, and food.

In 2022, Festival of W attracted more than 25,000 attendees, with 20 per cent being from outside of the region, and contributed an estimated \$4 million to the local economy.

The festival generates business for local hospitality, entertainment and arts, tourism, and accommodation during an historically quiet time of the year for these industries.

Festival of W is a Council led and managed event and this year has been supported by funding through the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund and Community Events Program. The major light and sound experience is being delivered by Mandylights who have secured sponsorship from Transgrid.

For further details about the festival, and to follow along as more festival details are announced, head to [www.visitwagga.com/fow](http://www.visitwagga.com/fow)

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#### MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

**What:** Festival of W lineup announcement and more.

**Who:** Destination and Events Coordinator Kimberly Parker and Events Officer Emma Corbett.

**When:** Friday 19 May 2023 at **9am**.

**Where:** Wollundry Lagoon (near the lower Library entrance).

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Contact 6926 9190 or [media@wagga.nsw.gov.au](mailto:media@wagga.nsw.gov.au)

### About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of more than \$236M.

The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300km road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as 'the City of Good Sports'.

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