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## **DARLING HARBOUR'S BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY AND MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL MARKS ITS 21ST YEAR**

The birth of the Buddha will be celebrated with the colourful, rich celebrations of the annual Buddha's Birthday and Multicultural Festival, held at Darling Harbour on 9 and 10 May – and everyone is welcome to join the festivities.

The Buddha's Birthday and Multicultural Festival is one of more than 20 free, family-friendly cultural festivals the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) hosts under its annual Culture Beats program, SHFA Chief Executive Officer, Catherine Gallagher said.

"This annual event is in its 21st year and is so popular, it has been extended to Palm Grove with even more celebrations and fun activities. Highlights include a baby blessing ceremony for children under five years of age, a Mother's Day blessing, a dedicated children's corner and a 'bathing the Buddha' ceremony," Ms Gallagher said.

The festival will also feature several multicultural performances, a lion dance, arts and crafts stalls and delicious vegetarian food.

Cultural festivals such as Buddha's Birthday are a key feature of Darling Harbour's entertainment and celebration calendar, helping to attract about 27 million visitors each year to the precinct.

"Throughout the year, Darling Harbour's cultural festivals proudly celebrate Australia's rich diversity, with performances featuring contemporary and traditional dance, theatre and music as well as stalls selling handicrafts and food," Ms Gallagher said.

Cultural festivals are a wonderful way for families to immerse themselves in Sydney's many vibrant cultures and have clearly proven popular with both international and domestic visitors.

Darling Harbour is in the midst of a major transformation and events such as the Buddha's Birthday festival help to ensure it remains Australia's premier place to celebrate, contributing \$1.2 billion annually to the NSW visitor economy.

Darling Harbour will soon be home to the new International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney), which will help showcase Darling Harbour on the international tourism and events stage.

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