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大金山中华公会
BENDIGO CHINESE ASSOCIATION

MEDIA ALERT / PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

When: 10am, Friday January 5
What: Announcement re. Lunar New Year, Year of the Dragon
Where: Golden Dragon Museum
Who: Bendigo Chinese Association President, Doug Lougoon and Golden Dragon Museum Chief Executive Officer Hugo Leschen

EMBARGOED TO 10AM, FRIDAY JANUARY 5

SUN LOONG TO WELCOME THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON

There will be no better place than Bendigo to celebrate Lunar New Year in February 2024.

It's the Year of the Dragon and local celebrations will feature a special appearance from one of Bendigo's favourite dragons, Sun Loong.

To ring in the festivities, the Bendigo Chinese Association (BCA) and Golden Dragon Museum will hold an evening of free family fun at **Dai Gum San, from 5.30pm – 8.30pm on Saturday February 10.**

Lunar New Year is the most important annual festival across many parts of Asia and 2024 is especially auspicious as it celebrates the most important animal in the Chinese zodiac.

The event will also feature performances by the BCA's renowned Lion Team and displays by Master Scott Liu, an internationally recognised martial arts expert, and his Hong Hong Kung Fu Club and other cultural community groups.

However, the spectacular highlight will be Sun Loong, Bendigo's Parading Dragon from 1970-2019. Sun Loong was restored just prior to his retirement in 2019 and now only appears on very special occasions. He last paraded in 2022 as part of celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Bendigo Easter Festival.

As part of the event, a traditional Awakening of the Dragon ceremony will be held featuring exploding firecrackers to wake Sun Loong.

Bookings are not required. Street food and soft drinks will be available onsite from 5pm, as well as souvenirs and restrooms at the Golden Dragon Museum.

BCA and Golden Dragon Museum are very pleased to continue their partnership with multicultural broadcaster SBS as the official sponsor of this year's Lunar New Year celebrations.

As Australia's most diverse broadcaster with a passion for celebrating our communities, SBS's support of this event over the past three years is a wonderful demonstration of their commitment not only to our multicultural society but also to regional communities in Central Victoria and across Australia. Sponsoring this important community event is part of a wider program of coverage across video and audio that SBS will be providing audiences in and around Lunar New Year which can be found through its website at www.sbs.com.au/language/english/en/lunar-new-year.

The BCA is also grateful for the support of the City of Greater Bendigo to ensure the smooth running of the event. A small road closure will be put in place from the Dai Gum San precinct to Pall Mall (including Easter Fair Way, Farmers Lane and the bottom-end of Park Road) to allow Sun Loong to parade.

Quotes attributable to:

Clare O'Neil SBS Director of Corporate Affairs:

"SBS is thrilled to once again support the Golden Dragon Museum and Bendigo Chinese Association as they work together to present one of the country's most exciting and celebratory Lunar New Year events. Lunar New Year is an important time for families to get together and wish each other well for the year ahead. We hope that everyone enjoys this year's very special Bendigo event."

Doug Lougoon, President, Bendigo Chinese Association

"The Bendigo Chinese Association has been working hard on developing a very special celebration to welcome the Year of the Dragon, while the parading of Sun Loong promises to be an event to be remembered by everyone for years to come. The appearance of Sun Loong, one of Bendigo's favourite dragons, is anticipated to draw a crowd well in excess of previous Lunar New Year celebrations."

Hugo Leschen, Chief Executive Officer, Golden Dragon Museum

"The Golden Dragon Museum holds Australia's largest and most significant collection of Chinese heritage and cultural objects. The opportunity to have the Bendigo Chinese Association parade Sun Loong is a very special way to highlight the importance of Lunar New Year, as it also showcases one of the museum's greatest treasures. Sun Loong was a highlight of the Bendigo Easter Festival for almost 50 years, so the community will be thrilled to see him again."

Lunar New Year is a very special family celebration, and the Museum is pleased to be able to again work with the Bendigo Chinese Association and SBS to bring this free event to the Bendigo community, for everyone to enjoy."

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