

18 November, 2009

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **TWO IS THE MAGIC NUMBER FOR THE OLD MELBOURNE GAOL *CRIME & JUSTICE EXPERIENCE!***

### **ONE OF MELBOURNE'S MAIN VISITOR ATTRACTIONS WINS THE VICTORIAN TOURISM AWARD FOR TWO YEARS IN A ROW! WOW!**

The Old Melbourne Gaol (OMG) *Crime & Justice Experience* has ONCE AGAIN taken out the Heritage and Cultural Award at the Melbourne Airport 2009 Victorian Tourism Awards.

More than 100 businesses and individuals from across the State vied for top honours at the prestigious awards held on 16 November.

The annual awards recognise leading businesses and individuals for their outstanding contribution to the Victorian tourism industry, which employs 185,000 people and contributes \$15.8 billion to the economy each year.

National Trust of Australia (Vic) CEO, Mr Martin Purslow said: "We are ecstatic to win the peak tourism award for cultural heritage in Victoria for the second year in a row. Old Melbourne Gaol has been recognised as the best of the best for visitors to Melbourne's attractions.

"The National Trust of Australia's (Vic) has invested in new cutting edge and confrontational interpretation. This includes immersive visitor led re-enactments in the old magistrates' court and all the new Kelly Courtroom drama where, on the site of his actual trial, visitors can take part of the judge, prosecutor, defence, witness or Ned himself. Visitors can be locked up in the old City Watch House, and come face-to-face with characters from the past in the Old Melbourne Gaol itself, the site of 135 hangings. All this makes a visit truly unique and results in an exceptional visitor attraction which was enjoyed by a record 164,000 visitors last year. This unique quality is what is recognised in this peak industry award," he said.

The Old Melbourne Gaol *Crime & Justice Experience* is home to our oldest prison, historic Old City Court and former Police City Watch House. Visitors can step back in time and walk the road to the gallows in a 19<sup>th</sup> century prison, be arrested in a modern-day Police Station or be put on trial in court.

This award-winning and unique heritage and cultural tourism attraction was opened in 1972 and relaunched with its new name in 2007. It employs 33 staff and has a number of dedicated and hard-working volunteers.

Old Melbourne Gaol *Crime & Justice Experience*  
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As a Victorian Tourism Award winner, The Old Melbourne Gaol *Crime & Justice Experience* will go on to represent Victoria at the 2009 Qantas Australian Tourism Awards to be held in Hobart on 26 February 2010.

Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Tim Holding congratulated the team from The Old Melbourne Gaol *Crime & Justice Experience* on their win. “The awards highlight the success of outstanding individuals and organisations in the Victorian tourism industry.”

“The Old Melbourne Gaol *Crime & Justice Experience* was judged the best in their field and I applaud them for going the extra mile to deliver memorable visitor experiences,” Mr Holding said.

“The Victorian Government is proud to recognise the achievements of all those who have worked so hard to make Victoria a world-class tourism destination,” Mr Holding said.

The results of the 30 business and individual award categories were announced at a Gala Ceremony that celebrated excellence in tourism including accommodation and touring, education, training and marketing.

More information and contact details for awardees are available at [victoriantourismawards.com](http://victoriantourismawards.com).

Images are available to media from Monday 23 November at [visionsofvictoria.com.au](http://visionsofvictoria.com.au) – under ‘Mini Collections and Tourism Awards – Melbourne Airport 2009 Victorian Tourism Awards’.

The Old Melbourne Gaol *Crime & Justice Experience* is operated by the National Trust of Australia (Vic). This is a Non-Government community funded organisation that is dedicated to preserving our cultural heritage.

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