



MEDIA ALERT

Lions on the loose in Melbourne – Prime Minister not in danger

LIONS HAVE A LOT TO CELEBRATE IN MELBOURNE

**8:45 AM, MELBOURNE CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE
CNR FLINDERS AND SPENCER ST MELBOURNE – CONFIRM ATTENDANCE HEATHER DEWSON 0458 550 270**

1 MAY 2009 – Prime Minister Kevin Rudd will open the Lions Service Club annual conference in Melbourne on 1 May 2009, at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centres.

The Lions have a lot to celebrate fresh from raising more than \$2.5 million dollars to support bushfire relief in Victoria.

Helping communities is back in vogue with Lions reporting unprecedented interest in volunteering as the global financial recession continues to bite.

There's no mistake that people around Australia are doing it tough – devastating bushfires, floods, financial turmoil and uncertainty. What's also certain is that Australians are turning away from the 'me' generation, to the 'us' generation, according to Lions Executive Officer Rob Oerlemans.

"Lions Service Clubs membership enquiries are 'off the chart', and that includes men and women, younger and older people from right around Australia. This time last year, we saw one or two enquiries from those wanting to help – now its in the hundreds – and still growing."

Some are responding to the Associations National advertising campaign, but a quick look at the enquiries shows that there are deeper motivations. Survey information drawn from enquiries shows younger people are looking for ways to get involved in their local communities and help others.

"It's nice that the community turns to Lions when it needs help, but we need, and what we will always need, is motivated and talented women and men to join our ranks and get involved. Otherwise, when there are bushfires, floods and cyclones – who will be there to back up our emergency services and rebuild communities?"

The Lions Conference will be a time for 2000 Lions to get together and share stories of how they have helped their communities.

The Lions Conference will be the first in many years attended by the International President of the Association, Al Brandel; a former New York Police Detective who investigated child abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency, domestic violence involving children and missing children. President Al leads a team of 1.3 million Lions around the world – an Association with the population of a small country!

For more information, please contact:

Rob Oerlemans
Executive Officer
Lions Australia
0409 778 044

About Lions Australia

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service organisation with 1.3 million members in 45,000 clubs in 205 countries. Lions Australia is one of Australia's largest service organisations with almost 28,000 members and 1,400 clubs across Australia. Lions Australia raises over \$20 million per annum to assist in community and health projects, and funding for Lions foundations and programs