

OLYMPIC CAULDRON LIT TO INSPIRE 2009 'MASTERS'

Premier Nathan Rees announced today that Sydney's Olympic cauldron would be ignited once again to welcome and inspire competitors in the 2009 World Masters Games.

Premier Nathan Rees joined Federal Minister for Sport Kate Ellis, NSW Minister for Tourism Jodi McKay, Games Ambassadors and athletes today to officially launch the Games.

"We are hosting the world's largest multiple sporting event and Sydneysiders will help deliver the warmest of welcomes to our great city," said Mr Rees.

"NSW loves sport and we love big events.

"More than 28,000 athletes from 95 countries will compete from October 10th -18th.

"I hope that everyone gets behind the spirit of these games and support our athletes when competition starts tomorrow.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to compete in a major international sports event, at venues normally reserved for the world's elite sportspeople."

The Games is expected to contribute almost \$50 million to the NSW economy which will help support jobs and businesses particularly in Western Sydney, where a large majority of competition venues will be based.

"Winning the bid for the Games is a great opportunity to showcase Sydney as an international events city.

"I know that thousands of visitors will see the very best Sydney and NSW have to offer."

Premier Rees and 101 year old lawn bowler Reg Trewin, from Griffith and 99 year old swimmer Margot Bates, from Brisbane had the honour of re-lighting the Sydney 2000 Olympic cauldron as part of today's ceremony. The cauldron will remain lit until 11pm Saturday night.

"Reg and Margot are what the World Masters Games is all about – being fit, fun and forever young.

"They set a fine example for all of us.

"I wish all competitors the very best of luck, whether they are in it to win or to do their very best," said Mr Rees.

Minister for Tourism Jodi McKay said there will be a great vibe around Sydney during World Masters Games competition.

"The Games will feature competition in 28 sports at 72 venues in and around Sydney, including many sites previously used during the Sydney Olympics," Ms McKay said.

"This weekend is also a great opportunity to relive Olympic moments at Sydney Olympic Park with the cauldron being alight and a host of sport on offer in our first-class Olympic venues."

For further details visit www.2009worldmasters.com