



Australian Government



Thursday 1 April 2010
EMBARGOED until 1st April, 12.01am

MEDIA RELEASE

A Larrikin honoured with Australia's top music prize

The nation's most valuable individual music prize – the Australia Council Don Banks Music Award 2010 – goes to the Australian folk icon Warren Fahey.

Minister for the Arts, Peter Garrett, will present the \$60,000 Australia Council for the Arts award in Canberra tonight at the opening concert of the National Folk Festival in front of Warren's friends, family, peers and an audience of 2,000 people.

Warren's humour, endless curiosity, irreverence and bottomless swag of songs, poems and stories have been acknowledged for bringing our collective history alive. His pioneering record company, Larrikin Records, and legendary retail outlet, Folkways Music, changed the face of music in Australia.

Chair of the Australia Council Music Board, composer Matthew Hindson says, 'Warren's passion for music and storytelling is contagious; he enthuses everyone around him. Something that stands out about Warren's career is his ability to find different ways to share that passion.'

'He is a highly respected writer, broadcaster, music publisher and performer. He has written more than a dozen books on music, folklore and history, and spent countless hours on the road collecting material – all with the aim of sharing this vibrant history with others. Warren has made an immeasurable contribution to the preservation of our folk heritage.'

In 1971, Warren hit the road in a Kombi Van with the slogan 'Australian Folklore Unit' emblazoned on the side, on a mission to tape record old bush songs, stories and oral histories. Over the past 40 years, he has gathered a collection of extraordinary material including songs that he still sings today.

Back in Sydney, Warren opened the doors of Folkways music in 1973. The store became internationally recognised as *the* destination for Australian music and specialist music from around the world, complete with a major mail order business and internationally popular annual catalogues.

Warren Fahey then established Larrikin Records in 1974, a label that has released over 500 recordings of Australian artists, including Eric Bogle, The Bushwackers Band, Redgum and Robyn Archer. Larrikin pioneered the release of Indigenous music with nearly 90 recordings and was the first record company to pay royalties to Indigenous communities.

Warren sold Larrikin Records in 1995 and took on the role of Deputy Managing Director at the Festival Mushroom Group for four years. In 2002, he established Undercover Music and Rouseabout Records. He has also served as a Governor on the ARIA Awards Board and a Director at the Australian Recording Industry Association. In 2008/9 he was Chair of Folk Alliance Australia.

He has received the Order of Australia, the Centennial Medal and the Advance Australia Award and the Republican of the Year Award.

And Warren isn't slowing down. He continues to spend his considerable energy furthering his collecting and research work and performing with his group, The Larrikins. In 2009, he released a 10 disc collection of Australian folk songs and this year releases a further two CDs and a new music book.

As he receives this top Australia Council award, Warren's passion finds yet another outlet with an extensive installation marrying Australian folk song with archival film, photographs and illustrations to create an immersive journey through the convict and industrial history of Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour. *Damned Souls & Turning Wheels* opens in May as a highlight of the 2010 Biennale of Sydney.

**The Australia Council Don Banks Music Award will be presented at the
opening concert of the
44th National Folk Festival at Exhibition Park in Canberra
at 7:00pm Thursday April 1**

**For interviews and media information, please contact Cameron Woods,
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BACKGROUND – Australia Council Don Banks Music Award

The Australia Council Don Banks Music Award is one of the top annual awards the Australia Council offers in recognition of Australian artists whose work represents outstanding achievement in their respective fields.

The Award is valued at \$60,000 and is offered by the Council's Music Board. The Board offers only one award annually to an individual artist.

The purpose of the Australia Council Don Banks Music Award is to honour an artist of high distinction who has made an outstanding and sustained contribution to Australia music over a period of many years.

The award was established in honour of Don Banks, Australian composer, performer, and the first Chair of the Music Board. Initially established to recognise Australian composers, nominations are now invited for music artists, including performers, from all areas of music.

The award is intended for artists over the age of 50, and is granted only once in an artist's lifetime. Nominations are accepted from individuals and arts organisations. Artists may not nominate themselves; nominations must come from a third party.

Past winners of the Australia Council Don Banks Music Award include:

- Richard Mills (1996)
- Richard Meale (1997)
- Bernie McGann (1998)
- Brenton Broadstock (1999)
- Bunna Lawrie (2000)
- Allan Browne (2001)
- Lyndall Hendrickson (2002)
- John Curro AM MBE (2003)
- Jan Sedivka (2004)
- Carl Vine (2005)
- Richard Gill OAM (2006)
- Peter Sculthorpe OBE (2007)
- Bob Sedergreen AM (2008)
- Dr Tony Gould (2009)