



Media Release

September 2017

SYDNEY FISH MARKET CELEBRATES THE BLESSING OF THE LOCAL FISHING COMMUNITY

This September, Sydney Fish Market will host Italian themed festivities for the annual Blessing of the Fleet to celebrate the local fishing community. On Sunday, 17 September Sydneysiders can join local fishers who will partake in the centuries old tradition featuring the procession of the Madonna.

The Blessing of the Fleet is predominantly a Catholic tradition originating in the Mediterranean, where fishing vessels are blessed in order to ensure a plentiful fishing season and a safe journey home. With so many of Sydney's fishers originating from this region, this custom holds a strong cultural significance for both the Italian and Sydney fishing communities.

Sydney Fish Market General Manager, Bryan Skepper, says "The Blessing of the Fleet ceremony is one of the pinnacle events on our calendar as it celebrates our fishing community and their heritage. The day is packed full of activities and entertainment for all to enjoy, and we are looking forward to everyone coming down and joining in the celebrations."

The key event of the day is the procession of the Madonna – a replica statue of the Santa Maria Di Porto Salvo, the protector and guardian of seafarers and fishermen that was commissioned by the Association Bagnara Calabria.

The ongoing partnership between Sydney Fish Market and the Association Bagnara Calabria signifies the cultural importance of the annual event. Together they have organised a day of authentic Italian food, singing and dancing performances, and of course the colourful procession of the Madonna, passing each retailer as it makes its way to the wharf.

Local fisherman, Paul Bagnato is a veteran attendee of the celebrations, with his family originating from the fishing regions of Calabria. He says "Each year my family and I come down to Sydney Fish Market to celebrate the Blessing of the Fleet as it represents who we are as a fishing community. We hope that Sydneysiders can come together and celebrate with us once again."

Following the procession and blessing, there will be entertainment for the whole family, including the intense crowd favourite, the spaghetti-eating competition. Everyone is welcome to come down to the free event at Sydney Fish Market and enjoy the cultural merriments, whilst tucking into some fresh seafood on the boardwalk and listening to live performers.



EVENT DETAILS:

WHAT: Blessing of the Fleet at Sydney Fish Market

WHEN: Sunday, 17 September 2017

- 10:30am – Blessing and the procession of the Madonna statue
- 12.00pm – Official welcome
- From 12:30pm – Live entertainment and activities (including prawn peeling competition at 1.00pm and spaghetti eating competition at 1.45pm)
- 3:00pm – Event concludes

WHERE: Sydney Fish Market, Bank Street, Pyrmont, NSW, 2009.

COST: Free

For more information visit www.sydneyfishmarket.com.au

- ENDS -

Sydney Fish Market online:

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#)

GETTING THERE: The best way to get to Sydney Fish Market is via public transport. Catch the Sydney Light Rail to the Fish Market stop, bus or walk to Sydney Fish Market. Bus services 501 and 389 regularly depart from the city. For route and timetable information visit www.transportnsw.info

Usual parking fees apply for motor vehicles.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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