

Street festival Honk Oz coming to Wollongong

By JOSHUA BUTLER Oct. 1, 2014, 10 p.m.



Lonnie Rooney, six, at the launch of the Honk Oz street festival on Wednesday. Picture: ROBERT PEET

A burst of noise and joy will take over Wollongong in January, with the inaugural Honk Oz street festival to liven up the city.

Designed as a fringe event to the Illawarra Folk Festival, celebrating its 30th birthday next year, Honk Oz will host free public events and a street parade in the botanic gardens, Arts Precinct and around the CBD.

Organiser Lotte Latukefu said the festival's main focus was on participation, with bands playing alongside anyone willing to get up and perform. "It is a very inclusive event, blurring the line between audience and participants," Ms Latukefu said.

"We want to celebrate our public spaces. We want anyone with a dusty old saxophone hidden under the bed, to come and get involved."

With an ideology influenced by mardi gras and carnivals, from New Orleans to Brazil and the folk traditions of Europe, Honk Oz is the first Australian incarnation of the Honk events in the United States. The festival was officially launched in the Arts Precinct on Wednesday with a lunchtime performance and an address by Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery.

"We want to create a space where we can have a great time," Cr Bradbery said.

"It will be great to see the activation of the Arts Precinct, the botanic gardens and the new mall."

Honk Oz will take place from January 9-11, with activities planned for the Conservatorium, gardens, mall and various spots in the CBD.



Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery and Lonnie Rooney.