

The Sydney Peace Foundation promotes peace with justice, the practice of non-violence, and awards Australia's International Peace Prize. The Foundation is a partnership between business, media, public service, community, and academic interests. It is a not-for-profit organisation funded by our Partners in Peace and by the support of organisations and individuals.

Moorambilla Children's Choir

On November 5th, the Sydney Opera House will host the 2008 Sydney Peace Prize Lecture, the first of the three annual Sydney Peace Prize events. In addition to the lecture itself, which will be given by this year's Peace Prize recipient, Mr. Patrick Dodson, the evening's entertainment will include performances by singer-songwriter Archie Roach, as well as the regional children's choir, *Moorambilla Voices*.

Archie Roach is of course no stranger to the stage and his presence could hardly be more fitting, given the theme of this year's Peace Prize lecture.

British songwriter Tony Hiller describes Roach's songs as "encased in classic blues, country and spiritual coverings." Of the message of reconciliation that the songs convey, Hiller says that "no singer-songwriter in the country comes within cooee of Archie Roach in expressing the suffering of Aboriginal Australia."



Singer-songwriter Archie Roach records his latest album "Journey" (photo courtesy: www.archieroach.com.au)

For most of the children of *Moorambilla Voices*, it will be the first time on a big stage — especially one the size of the Opera House Concert Hall.

Indeed, for many of the 50 boys and girls in the choir, it will be their first time ever to visit the city of Sydney. They will be making the journey from such remote NSW communities as Menindee, White Cliffs, Lightning Ridge, and Coonamble.



Above: Members of Moorambilla Regional Girls' Choir gather for a photo. (Photo courtesy: www.moorambilla.com)

The group of 8-15 year olds who will perform at the Opera House will be a mixture of boys and girls, indigenous and non-indigenous. However, *Moorambilla Voices* is actually an umbrella organisation that has created and supports the ongoing development of two separate choirs: the Moorambilla Regional Boys Choir and the Moorambilla Regional Girls Choir. The organisation also supports a regional youth project called *MAXed Out*, as well as mentoring various regional adult choirs.

Auditions for the children's choirs take place in March each year. Artistic Director Michelle Leonard personally visits over 45 schools in 22 towns, covering 4000kms over a period of two weeks. Michelle looks for "gifted 'raw' musicians" who show "outstanding natural capacity." Those who are selected participate in two annual 'residency camps', where they prepare for performances at the *Moorambilla Festival*, which was held in Coonamble in late September this year.



Members of Moorambilla Regional Boys Choir.

At least one of the songs that the choir will perform on November 5th was written/produced by members of the choir themselves. *Moorambilla Voices* seeks to foster individual and regional self-expression among children from regional and remote areas who in most cases have no other opportunities to build their skills and engage in the performing arts.

The result is the creation of "a body of Australian music that directly reflects the life experiences of the choristers and those of the region" (Michelle Leonard). So don't miss the opportunity to hear *Moorambilla Regional Choir* for the first time in Sydney on November 5th. For the choir it will be a dream come true; for the audience a guaranteed uplifting and inspirational experience.

(For further information on Moorambilla Voices, visit their website at: www.moorambilla.com)

November 5th 2008

**City of Sydney
Peace Prize Lecture
by Patrick Dodson**

**Concert Hall
Sydney Opera House**

**Concession - \$20; Adult - \$25;
School Group Concessions Available.**

**Bookings: (02) 9250 7777
www.sydneyoperahouse.com**