

Leo Schofield

Prominent contributor to Australia's cultural life

Leo Schofield is a prominent figure in Australian public life. Although always closely involved with major arts and cultural organisations, he never actually worked in this field until August 1993 when he was appointed Artistic Director of the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts. The three subsequent Melbourne Festivals, planned and implemented under Leo Schofield's direction, were outstanding artistic and commercial successes. They generated national and international media interest and exceptional community and corporate support.



Returning to his home city of Sydney, Leo Schofield was appointed Director of the Sydney Festival. He organised four highly successful annual festivals between 1998 and 2001.

Leo Schofield was the Artistic Director of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Arts Festival and the Sydney 2000 Paralympics Arts Festival. He also served as Artistic Director of Sydney's renowned New Year's Eve celebrations for 2002, 2003 and in 2004 when this internationally acclaimed spectacle was honoured by the Australian Tourism Commission as the most outstanding special event of the year. In 2005 he acted as Creative Director for the first-ever visit to Australia by the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. This event drew a crowd of over one hundred and fifty thousand spectators over five sold-out performances.

Prior to organising and directing these landmark cultural events, Leo Schofield spent twenty-five years in the advertising and communications industry, mostly in Australia but with stints in London and New York. He was Creative Director of several of the country's largest agencies before setting up his own communications consultancy.

During this time, Leo Schofield developed a parallel career as journalist and broadcaster. For over a decade his weekly column in The Sydney Morning Herald was one of the most widely read in the country. This readership expanded even further with his appointment as a columnist with The Sunday Telegraph, Australia's biggest-selling newspaper. He has written for a variety of ACP magazines, and, as Editor-at-Large for Gourmet Traveller traveled and written on destinations and food. Leo has wrote a weekly column for The Bulletin and has contributed monthly columns, feature articles and news items to Australian House and Garden and to Men's Style.

As journalist and broadcaster, Mr. Schofield accompanied the Sydney Symphony Orchestra on its 1988 Bicentennial Tour of the United States and a further link with the orchestra was forged in

February 1996 when the SSO became an independent subsidiary of the ABC and Mr. Schofield was appointed inaugural Chairman of the Board. He retired from this position in May 2000, but retains strong links with the Orchestra.

Leo Schofield has been associated with numerous charitable, conservation and environmental causes. He has served on the Centennial Park Trust and on a number of NSW Government advisory committees. A past member of the Executive of the National Trust of Australia (NSW), he was also Chairman of the Committee of Review - Commonwealth Owned Heritage Properties.

Over the years he has also worked with many arts organisations, often in a fund-raising capacity. He served for nine years as a Trustee of the Powerhouse Museum for Sydney and as a member for the Federal Government's Cultural Advisory Panel with input into the Creative Nation policy. He has been co-Chairman of the Dame Joan Hammond Foundation, a member of the Advisory Panel for the Victorian Government's Victoria Commissions initiative, and a Trustee of Melbourne's Old Treasury Building.

Mr. Schofield is Creative Director and a Presenter of Ovation, Australia's only dedicated arts channel on subscriber television. In his role as presenter, he hosts *Leo Schofield's Sunday* and *Leo in Conversation*, a series of interviews with leading Australian and international personalities in the arts. Interviewees have included conductors Charles Dutoit, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Simone Young, theatre director Robert Lepage, violinist Nigel Kennedy, actor Geoffrey Rush, the late Luciano Pavarotti, the inimitable Andre Rieu and composer Tan Dun. In June 2008, he recorded interviews in London and Vienna with leading opera stars Rolando Villazon, Rene Fleming and Rene Pape and in Brussels with the popular entertainer Helmut Lotti.

In partnership with Ian McRae, the former General Manager of the Australian Ballet, Leo Schofield brought the world-famous Paris Opera Ballet to Australia for the very first time. Performing in Sydney in June 2007, the company attracted sold out houses and massive public and critical enthusiasm.

In June of 2000, Leo Schofield was made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to the Sydney and Melbourne Festivals, to conservation and heritage and to fundraising for the arts. In January 2001, Mr. Schofield was granted one of the French Government's most prestigious honours when he was created a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and in October 2001 he was made a Doctor of Letters honoris causa by the University of New South Wales. He is also a recipient of the Federal Government's Centenary Medal.

Leo Schofield continues to consult to business and the arts. Leo's his best-selling book, *The Garden at Bronte*, a record of his restoration of the garden at historic Bronte House in Sydney, was published by Penguin / Viking in 2002. In August 2004 it was awarded the Horticultural Media Association's Golden Laurel for the most outstanding gardening book published in Australia in 2004. In early 2005, he was appointed to the board of Trustees of the Sydney Opera House and in 2008 he was appointed to the board of the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra and the committee of review for the development of Sydney's East Darling Harbour.

In February 2005, Mr. Schofield acquired Dysart House at Kempton in Tasmania. He is currently restoring this important 1840's building and plans to divide his time between Sydney and Tasmania. He is also working on a memoir and a book on Tasmania and contributes an additional weekly column on life there to the Saturday edition of The Mercury.

Client testimonials

“ Our audience was hanging off Leo's every word He was professional, well researched and extremely warm, humorous and slick on stage.

- *Ticketek*

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