Museum presents *A Day in Pompeii*

The excitement and drama of ancient Pompeii will be revealed in *A Day in Pompeii*, a Melbourne Winter Masterpieces exhibition on show at Melbourne Museum from 26 June to 25 October 2009.

“This exhibition is a fabulous coup for the state,” said the Hon. John Brumby MP, Premier of Victoria. “The story of the ancient city of Pompeii is one that continues to intrigue and fascinate people of all ages.”

“A Day in Pompeii is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Australian audiences to see this legendary Roman city brought to life,” said Dr Patrick Greene, CEO, Museum Victoria.

“As one of Melbourne’s most popular cultural tourist attractions, we are delighted to be joining the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series and look forward to sharing the wonder of Pompeii with thousands of visitors.”

With more than 250 objects – many never shown before in Australia – *A Day in Pompeii* tells the story of life in the ancient city, from food and dining to shopping, medicine and religion, and includes exquisite objects including marble sculpture, gold jewellery and delicate frescoes.

“No other ancient city has been found so complete and intact,” explained Dr Greene. “The architecture, art and personal belongings recovered from Pompeii provide an unparalleled record of what life was like in the Roman Empire.”

On August 24, A.D. 79, the Roman city of Pompeii was buried by the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The pumice and thick volcanic ash that ended the lives of so many also encased the city in a virtual time capsule for almost 2,000 years. The city remained largely lost and forgotten until rediscovered by archaeologists in the early 1700s.

Among the most poignant objects will be body casts, made by pouring plaster into hollows left where victims of the eruption were buried. “The casts give us a glimpse into the human tragedy that unfolded,” said Dr Greene. “While many residents escaped, many thousands lost their lives. I think the body casts will connect visitors on a deeply emotional level to the people who lived and died in Pompeii.”

*A Day in Pompeii* will also feature a spectacular immersive 3D theatre that will allow visitors to experience the dramatic eruption of Vesuvius, as well as the latest research into the science of volcanoes.

The Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series is now firmly established as a must see cultural event. This year *A Day in Pompeii* will join *Salvador Dalí: Liquid Desire* at the National Gallery of Victoria to make Melbourne an unmissable cultural destination. Melbourne Winter Masterpieces is a Victorian Government initiative that brings outstanding exhibitions from around the world exclusively to Melbourne, and in its first five years has attracted more than 1.34 million people.

*A Day in Pompeii* is presented in association with the Soprintendenza Speciale per I Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei (SAP). Adults $20, concession $14, children $12, family $54 (all tickets include entry to Melbourne Museum).

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For further media information, interviews or images, please contact:
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