



Mayoral Message

Dear Resident

If you've been lucky enough to experience the Lebanese Film Festival, then you'll know what an incredible experience it is.

What began as a small festival over a decade ago, sparked by an idea conceived in Bankstown by two Lebanese locals, is now the world's largest festival of its kind, attracting thousands.

It really is a case of "from Bankstown to Beirut" – it's a film festival that was established quite simply as a way for Lebanese people in the community to connect through their similar backgrounds, celebrating their roots through film.

This year, the festival is proudly celebrating its 10th anniversary and, in my experience, they always feature films that are quite simply mind-blowing. It's also a time to really think about how incredible these film makers are, that many of these films are created amid a backdrop of hardship.

Let's not forget that Lebanese filmmakers are incredibly resilient. The nation has suffered through a political, economic, social and environmental crisis where many lost loved ones, homes, jobs and livelihoods. And yet the filmmakers continue to produce excellent films that reflect the day-to-day life of those living in Lebanon as well as touching on subjects that are considered taboo.

The films also challenge the perceptions of Lebanon, its people, culture and traditions. I'm excited to see many of the films on offer this year, especially the opening night film "Memory Box," an exceptional Canadian-Lebanese-French film, written and directed by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige.

The festival kicks off on 25 August at the Bryan Brown theatre with special guest, award winning Lebanese film maker, Ziad Doueiri. Ziad is best known for his award-winning films "West Beirut" and "The Insult", a film that was nominated at the 90th Academy Awards, in the Best International Feature Film category.

He'll be joined by Bryan Brown and acclaimed journalist, author and diversity advocate Antoinette Lattouf as Master of Ceremonies, in celebrating the opening night.

I'd like to encourage you to support the festival, be entertained and learn more about the wonderful Lebanese culture.

Yours sincerely,



Clr Khal Asfour
MAYOR