

## MEDIA ALERT

For immediate release



# The Big Issue in Australia turns 25

The Big Issue will celebrate 25 years today, Friday 4 June, marking the quarter-century milestone with a very special bumper birthday magazine edition.

The 76-page commemorative edition will celebrate 25 years of The Big Issue's rich history, told through the eyes of its magazine vendors – those experiencing homelessness, marginalisation and disadvantage.

*The Big Issue* magazine was launched in Melbourne in 1996 and has since expanded to six states and territories with hundreds of vendors proudly donning the iconic *Big Issue* fluoro vest across the country every day.

Since its first edition, more than 7000 vendors have sold 13 million copies of the magazine, to a significant readership of over 250,000 people per year - putting \$32 million into the pockets of those living on the margins.

The Big Issue CEO Steven Persson said The Big Issue is an agent for social change, and it is more committed than ever to helping people build confidence and capacity to help themselves.

“At its heart, The Big Issue is a community and together, we are in the business of taking people out of poverty. For 25 years, we have done just that,” Mr Persson said.

“Our unique model not only provides opportunities for people to earn an income, but importantly, to build confidence and their capacity to help themselves.

“The sense of pride, purpose and community inclusion that comes with proudly working as a *Big Issue* vendor can be life changing. We commend the thousands of vendors who have proudly made positive changes in their lives over the past 25 years.”

Mr Persson thanked The Big Issue's community of vendors, program participants, readers, supporters, partners, volunteers and staff for their commitment to making a difference.

“You have stood alongside The Big Issue for 25 years and shown your dedication to alleviating poverty in our community. We thank you for showing faith in a unique model that provides positive, sustainable employment solutions for those who need it most,” he said.

“On our birthday, our wish is that you continue supporting The Big Issue and our vendors – first and foremost, by picking up a copy of our commemorative 25<sup>th</sup> birthday magazine.”

You can also join in the birthday celebrations online by tuning in to the 25 Years Big video, launching on June 4 at [thebigissue.org.au/25-years-big](http://thebigissue.org.au/25-years-big). This exclusive video features stories and birthday messages from our vendors, customers, partners, contributors and more, including a special birthday message from musician Jimmy Barnes.

\*Selling in Melbourne is currently paused due to COVID restrictions. Melbourne readers can support vendors by pledging to purchase the 25<sup>th</sup> birthday magazine edition once they return to selling. Readers can also send a letter of support to your local vendor at [editorial@bigissue.org.au](mailto:editorial@bigissue.org.au) or through our social media channels and we will pass it along.

**ENDS**

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*Big Issue* vendors, staff and spokespersons are available for interview. For more information or to confirm media opportunities contact:

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### **About The Big Issue:**

The Big Issue is Australia's most successful and longest-standing social enterprise, best known for *The Big Issue* magazine.

The Big Issue has grown to include additional programs and enterprises, including a subscription service that provides employment to women experiencing disadvantage, a street soccer program in 21 locations nationally, and workshops on homelessness and disadvantage for school and corporate groups. These allow The Big Issue to tackle different aspects of homelessness and marginalisation, and provide meaningful employment opportunities. For more information visit our new website at [thebigissue.org.au](http://thebigissue.org.au)