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The Search is on for Australia's Next Child and Youth Photographers for 2008

The Aussie Kids Photo Festival is a unique event which encourages children's photographic creativity and proudly supports UNICEF Australia. The Festival opens its 'Call for Entries' today, in time for the school holidays. The awards for The Australian CHILD Photographer of 2008 and The Australian YOUTH Photographer of 2008 will be given out on 2 May 2008 at Sydney Aquarium.

SYDNEY, Thursday 6th December 2007: This Sunday (9th December) marks the official launch of the Aussie Kids Photo Festival 2008, a unique photography festival that invites kids aged between 3 to 12 years old to submit their photos into a competition that could end up crowning them **The Australian CHILD or The Australian YOUTH Photographer 2008.**

The Festival's tagline is, **"See the world through children's eyes"** and that is exactly what it aims to do. Entrance is FREE! Kids can submit a portfolio of 6 photos, one in each of the Festival categories – 'Animals', 'Friends & Family', 'Landscape', 'My Favourite Photo', 'Play & Action', and 'Self-Portrait'. While entry to the Festival is free we encourage participants to donate to UNICEF Australia. UNICEF is the United Nations Children's Fund, the world's leading advocate for children.

Julia Vargiu, Festival Co-Founder and proud parent of a young inspiring photographer, says that idea of the Aussie Kids Photo Festival is to encourage the art of photography as a healthy, stimulating activity for kids, and to demonstrate how artistic young children can be.

"We want to encourage children to capture their worlds from their unique point of view. Every child thinks, feels and sees the world in their own unique way and through participation in the Aussie Kids Photo Festival their imaginative expression can now be both preserved and shared for the enjoyment of everyone in the community. This forum will add a new dimension to the observation of life in Australia and provide real insight into understanding the emotions and perspectives of growing children. Our goal is to give your kids the great feeling of achievement that comes from having their talents exhibited to the public - and of course to support them as they scratch their creative itches!"

At a special ceremony on 2 May 2008 at the Reef Theatre in Sydney Aquarium, over 40 awards will be presented. All finalists will receive prizes from **SpongeBob SquarePants** during his first ever visit to the Sydney Aquarium. The Australian CHILD & YOUTH Photographers of the Year and the **People's Choice Awards** will be named by Nickelodeon Australia's **Sarvo** hosts **Kyle & Maude!** Winners will also appear on Nickelodeon.

Nickelodeon's General Manager Katrina Southon said, "*Nickelodeon is delighted to be supporting The Aussie Kids Photo Festival. Here at Nick we always encourage kids' creativity and self expression and are thrilled to be involved in the Festival that offers kid's a chance to showcase their works. I've absolutely no doubt the entries will be awe-inspiring!*"

The Aussie Kids Photo Festival 'Call for Entries' coincides with UNICEF's International Day of Broadcasting. **UNICEF Australia Chief Executive, Carolyn Hardy** said, "*UNICEF Australia is delighted to be involved with the Aussie Kids Photo Festival. It is a wonderful opportunity for Australian children to celebrate the art of photography beginning on International Children's Day of Broadcasting*".

Entries are open NOW online at www.aussiekidsphotofestival.com, and must be received by 14 March 2008. Submission requirements for the Festival have been left wide open, to allow as many entries as possible. Children's photos can be taken in any format, including digital cameras, camera phones, disposable cameras, or any other photo format. Those photos will need to be submitted electronically to the Festival website at www.aussiekidsphotofestival.com.

A panel of celebrity judges and award-winning photographers will have the difficult task of choosing the 36 finalists from the entries, to be exhibited online and at iconic Sydney Aquarium from 11th April 2008. The national public is invited to vote for the People's Choice Awards.

There are heaps of thrilling prizes to be won from supporters – Fuji digital cameras & photo printing, Microsoft Xbox360s & newly released Zunes, Hasbro games and toys, passes to Sydney Aquarium & Sydney Wildlife World and more.

Fujifilm Australia Senior Category Manager Matt Dole said, "The Aussie Kids Photo Festival is a very worthwhile event. We're happy to support plans that introduce kids to the magic of photography."

For More Information: Julia Vargiu, 0408 860 471, jvargiu@newbusiness.com.au

The complete collection of last year's photographs and winners, in addition to those shown below, are available in high resolution for download and publication.

Please visit www.ozmedia.com/aussiekidsphotofestival/index.html

Where possible we would greatly appreciate your efforts to credit the young photographers for their work.