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HSBC ANNOUNCES *CIRQUE DU SOLEIL* SPONSORSHIP

HSBC has announced its first performing arts sponsorship in Australia with its global banking service, HSBC Premier, entering the world of *Dralion* as the official sponsor of the *Cirque du Soleil* 2008/9 tour of Australia.

Dralion will be the fifth *Cirque du Soleil* production to tour Australia, following record-breaking numbers with the most recent *Varekai* tour, which performed to over one million people across the country.

The show's name is drawn from its two main symbols: the dragon, representing the East, and the lion, representing the West.

According to Darren Friedlander HSBC's head of marketing in Australia, *Dralion*'s theme and worldwide audience was appealing because of HSBC's own East-West origin, its global brand and worldwide distribution.

"Sponsorship of the *Cirque du Soleil Dralion* production is a strategic choice for HSBC Australia because it's positioned exactly where the Bank's cultural and commercial interests converge.

"HSBC's origins are deeply seated in East-West relations. The Bank was founded in 1865 to fund trade flows between China, India and the West. Today, HSBC is the world's largest emerging markets bank, leveraging its global scale and on-the-ground presence in 83 countries around the globe to support east-west, west-west and east-east connectivity to the benefit of its 125 million customers worldwide.

"HSBC Premier takes branding honours for our *Cirque du Soleil* relationship. In 2007 our premium banking service Premier was relaunched as the most comprehensive global banking and wealth management service ever devised. Premier offers seamless cross-border banking and the promise that our customers can, for the first time, take their banking relationship with them wherever in the world they choose to live or work.

"HSBC identified *Cirque du Soleil* as an ideal property for Premier based on the production's target audience profile. Premier is a global banking service targeting affluent, educated, professionals who are internationally mobile, sophisticated and knowledgeable. The *Cirque du Soleil* audience is just that," he said.

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As part of the sponsorship, the HSBC Premier brand will be seen by close to 1 million Australians via the *Cirque du Soleil Dralion* marketing campaign. The *Cirque du Soleil* audience is perfectly positioned within the Premier target market.

As well as extensive exposure via the *Cirque du Soleil* marketing campaign and the performance itself, HSBC will also leverage the sponsorship with existing and prospective retail and corporate customers within Australia via exclusive ticketing offers and access to unique experiences that only *Cirque du Soleil* can provide.

At a corporate level, *Cirque du Soleil* offers one of the best business entertainment programs amongst arts sponsorships in Australia. HSBC will leverage the sponsorship across the business to deliver on this opportunity.

HSBC Premier's sponsorship of *Cirque du Soleil* will cover the complete five city *Dralion* tour of Australia:

- Sydney – from July 2008
- Canberra – from October 2008
- Brisbane – from November 2008
- Perth – from January 2009
- Melbourne – from April 2009

For further information on the *Cirque du Soleil Dralion* tour visit – www.cirquedusoleil.com

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Notes to editors

HSBC Bank Australia

In Australia, the HSBC Group offers an extensive range of financial services through a network of 35 branches and offices. These services include personal and commercial financial services, financial planning, trade finance, treasury and financial markets, payments and cash management and securities custody.

Principal HSBC Group members operating in Australia include HSBC Bank Australia Limited (ABN 48 006 434 162) and The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (ABN 65 117 925 970). HSBC is marketed worldwide as 'the world's local bank'.

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