

TULIP TIME 2008 SHONE LIGHT & COLOUR ON DEPRESSION & MENTAL ILLNESS

Tulip Time has become Australia's oldest and most beautiful flora festival. Now in its 47th year, Tulip Time showcased a spectacular display of over 100,000 tulips and 25,000 annuals in Corbett Gardens, Bowral and some of the best private gardens in Australia.

Former, Southern Highlands resident and media personality Maggie Tabberer was this year's Tulip Time Ambassador, aiding the festival promotion both domestically and internationally.

Tulip Time 2008 this year, partnered with the Black Dog Institute to promote the theme of mental illness and depression. Special guest Olympian swimmer, John Konrads spoke in Corbett Gardens about his experiences of living with a mental illness.

Corbett Gardens featured two magnificent display gardens depicting the Black Dog Institute logo not in paint but in masses of tulips.

The Southern Highlands community will directly benefit from its association with the Black Dog Institute with the establishment of two new Mood Assessment Program Centres (MAP) to open in Bowral and Mittagong to help doctors diagnose mental illness more effectively.

Also supporting this year's Tulip Time Festival was the Sydney Cycling Club, 100 of their riders undertook a ride from Centennial Park, Sydney to Bowral (via Macquarie Pass) on Saturday 27 September, to be part of the Tulip Time Street Parade in Bowral. 'The Black Dog Challenge' cycle ride raised awareness of mental illness whilst raising valuable funds for the Black Dog Institute to continue research into depression and bipolar disorder.

The Tulip Time Gala Dinner was also a highlight of the Tulip Time Festival, staging Black Dog Institute presentations from Professor Gordon Parker and Matthew Johnstone, illustrator and author of *I Had A Black Dog* (2005) and *Living with a Black Dog* (2008). Margaret Olley, Australia's most prized still-life painter kindly donated a commissioned painting of orange parrot tulips that was auctioned at the Tulip Time Gala Dinner to raise funds for Tulip Time and the Black Dog Institute.

Olley said, "Depression, which includes alcoholism, is so common and the Black Dog Institute does a wonderful job helping people and I am very pleased to be able to support this cause". The Black Dog Institute's mission is to advance the understanding, diagnosis and management of mood disorders by raising awareness, clinical research, education and training standards.