

**Festival of Small Halls Announces Spring Tour 2020**

Popular and wide-ranging regional music tour Festival of Small Halls has announced the **Spring Tour 2020** featuring one of Australia's most celebrated singer-songwriters **Shellie Morris**, along with critically acclaimed blues and roots duo **Hussy Hicks**.

Presented by veteran festival producers Woodfordia Inc, the not-for-profit music tour will cover around 7000kms, delivering the finest of Queensland's acoustic musical talent to 13 community halls off the beaten track this October.

Touring artist Shellie Morris can only be described as a national treasure – her authentic, soul-touching voice has filled hallowed halls of the world including the Sydney Opera House, the opening of the Vancouver Winter Olympics and the Skirball Centre in New York. She has toured with Yothu Yindi, sung with John Cale, Sinead O'Connor and Gurrumul Yunupingu and has been recognised across Australia with accolades such as Northern Territory Australian of the Year, the 2014 NAIDOC National Artist of the Year and multiple National Indigenous Music Awards and Deadly awards.

"Rural and remote areas are so close to my heart, I've been working in them since I started my journey sharing song and language, said Shellie.

"These communities are the beating heart of our country, contributing so much to the valuable social fabric and boasting countryside that is second to none across the world, Ms Morris said.

"I can't wait to visit all these incredible communities and share my stories, hear from the wonderful people and of course get back on the road safely!"

Shellie Morris is co-billed with prolific blues stars Hussy Hicks. Comprised of vocalist Leesa Gentz, who was first signed to Warner/ Chappell Music at just 16 years old and guitarist Julz Parker, Hussy Hicks have perfected their powerful live act over more than a decade of touring. Their six studio albums have been unleashed on a receptive public at Australia's biggest blues and roots festivals and across the world on multiple sold-out European tours. Their powerful songwriting and energetic live shows have been recognised with awards like Album of the Year and Artist of the Year from the Gold Coast Music Awards, Queensland Music Awards and a

Golden Guitar nomination. Guitarist Julz Parker has been called “Australia’s top female guitar player” by Phil Emmanuel and when Bluesfest audiences were asked their favourite guitarist over the festivals’ 29 year history, Julz ranked fifth, just behind artists like Santana and BB King and the highest Australian and female in the list.

Vocalist Leesa Gentz said, “Julz and I could not be more thrilled to have the opportunity to tour throughout our home state for the Festival of Small Halls!

“We’re doubly excited to be sharing the bill with the incredible Shellie Morris, who we’ve both been big fans of since we saw the Black Arm Band back in 2010 performing alongside Me’Shell Ndegeocello, Sinéad O’Connor, John Cale and the late Dr G Yunupingu.

“It’s an honour to be involved in this tour and we just can’t wait to play and sing our hearts out for you all, said Ms Gentz.

Kicking off in the lush rainforest hinterlands of the Gold Coast at Springbrook Community Hall, the tour heads as far west as the grazier town of Cunnamulla, nearly 800 kilometres due west of Brisbane. Zigzagging up through the endless red dirt roads of the outback, the tour literally peaks at Ravenshoe, Queensland’s highest town, before heading south through central Queensland to end up in the rolling hills of the Sunshine Coast hinterlands. Each distinct landscape and diverse community promises a common, unifying factor – hall doors flung open, the finest of country hospitality and the warmest of socially-distanced welcomes.

“It’s quite an honour to serve communities who feel ready to step up to the plate and safely bring people back together after such a devastating year, said tour producer Eleanor Rigden.

“We knew we had to come back strong, particularly with our programming, after the impacts of Covid-19 and the inability to tour international artists for the foreseeable future.

“What we didn’t know was if regional communities were ready for gatherings again, even though the advice tells us these types of events are low-risk. But of course, these gutsy folk have seized the challenge like they have with every tough situation that has come across their thresholds. After droughts, bushfires, floods and more they’re making sure these vital community hubs can re-open with typical composure, determination and poise, said Ms Rigden.

“We intend to honour this ongoing courage with a celebration of the community spirit that has got so people through these times.”

At a time when a need for connection with others has become more important than ever, Festival of Small Halls is mindful of its responsibility in presenting this tour. Built on a foundation of delivering great music combined with local spirit, it uniquely positions itself as a tool to be taken into the hands of communities who know their local needs best.

Festival of Small Halls Spring tour starts on the 14th of October at the Springbrook Community Hall before continuing on to 12 communities across Queensland. The tour concludes at the Mapleton Hall on 1 November.

Tickets on sale from 9 September at [www.festivalofsmallhalls.com](http://www.festivalofsmallhalls.com)

**Woodfordia Inc presents**  
**FESTIVAL OF SMALL HALLS SPRING TOUR 2020**  
**featuring Shellie Morris and Hussy Hicks**

Oct-14	Springbrook, QLD	Springbrook Community Hall
Oct-15	Jondaryan, QLD	Jondaryan Public Hall
Oct-16	Texas, QLD	Texas Memorial Hall
Oct-17	Jackson, QLD	QWCA Jackson Hall
Oct-18	Cunnamulla, QLD	Paroo Shire Hall
Oct-22	Barcaldine, QLD	Barcaldine Town Hall
Oct-23	Hughenden, QLD	Parish Hall
Oct-24	Greenvale, QLD	Greenvale Community Hall
Oct-25	Ravenshoe, QLD	Ravenshoe Town Hall
Oct-29	Clermont, QLD	All Saints Anglican Church Hall
Oct-30	Wowan, QLD	Wowan RSL Hall
Oct-31	Guluguba, QLD	Downfall Creek Community Hall
Nov-1	Mapleton, QLD	Mapleton Hall

**LINKS**

<http://festivalofsmallhalls.com>  
[www.facebook.com/festivalofsmallhalls](http://www.facebook.com/festivalofsmallhalls)  
<https://www.instagram.com/smallhallsaus/>

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**ENDS**