



Hold on to your sides, let the rib-tickling begin

IT'S game on for the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, which last night kicked off a month-long laughathon.

A parade of big names fired off the first round of hilarity at a packed Palais Theatre for the *Opening Night Allstars Supershow*. More than 1000 performers will put on a record 477 shows across

Sally Bennett

the city for the 27th annual festival.

Top home-grown comedian Wil Anderson (above), who is performing in his 18th festival, will be the first to put on a full season of solo shows at the Princess Theatre.

"This may be as big as it ever gets," he said

yesterday of performing 22 shows in the 1500-seat venue.

"I saw Hugh Jackman there in *Beauty and the Beast* when I was a teenager with my mum.

"It might be a terrible idea that we're doing something this big, but we're doing it. I want it to be the best show I've ever done."

The international line-up for this year's festival includes Tracy Morgan, Ruby Wax, Rich Hall, Stephen K Amos, Arj Barker, Danny Bhoj and Jack Dee.

Other top local acts include Sam Simmons, Hannah Gadsby, Tom Gleeson, Josh Thomas, Peter Helliar, Judith Lucy and Denise Scott.

Festival director Susan Provan said it was shaping up to be an exciting year.

"You can't ever really beat a live performance," she said.

"We're so lucky to live in a city that hosts a festival which people from all over Australia and the world travel to."

Wil guest edits Confidential today: Pages 30-31



Pump your pockets

John Rolfe

AUSTRALIAN motorists could save as much as \$200 a year on fuel by boycotting the bowsers on Thursday and Fridays.

One of the most comprehensive independent studies of petrol prices to be done in this country shows the end of the working week is the petrol price peak in 90 per cent of the 114 cities and towns analysed.

There was not a single place where either Thursday

Avoid buying dearest petrol on Thursday, Friday

or Friday was the cheapest day to fill up, yet that was when demand peaked, the study's author, University of New England Economics Professor Abbas Valadkhani, said.

The ACCC also found that Thursday was the day of highest demand in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide last year.

By shifting purchases to

the cheapest days "motorists can counter-attack" against petrol retailers, Prof Valadkhani said. "Everyone in Australia, avoid Thursday and Friday, that is the message," he said.

In almost two-thirds of locations, the cheapest day to buy fuel was Tuesday.

Sunday was best in one in five places.

Prof Valadkhani's analysis

was published in the journal, *Energy Policy*. He looks at seven years of data and identifies 16 locations where potential savings are significant. These have the strongest price cycles — all are mainland state capitals or major regional centres.

Metropolitan Melbourne, Geelong and Sunbury are the only Victorian locations on the shortlist.

The largest price differentials identified offer a motorist who buys on the day with the cheapest average an annual saving of up to \$200 if filling a family-sized car weekly. "Motorists can certainly get a better deal if they are conscious of the fuel price cycle," said Australian Automobile Association executive director Andrew McKellar.

But he said the price cycle had "changed substantially in the past 18 months". ACCC research suggested the changes began in 2010.

The cycle is now less predictable. Rather than being seven days, it tended to be 10 to 12 days long. That meant the day of the peak and trough changed.

ACCC monitoring in Melbourne last year found the peak of the cycle was most common on Sunday, then Thursday. The low was most common on a Wednesday.

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