

**HD** **PLUG PULLED ON BIG DAY OUT AFTER SALE TO US FIRM**

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The Big Day Out will not be back in Auckland next year, after the festival was bought by an American **company**.

The Australian director of the event, A J Maddah, sold his share to C3 Presents, which has pulled all shows for this year.

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But the Texan **company**, which also runs Lollapalooza, said yesterday that it was "proud" of the Australian brand and that "we intend to bring back the festival in future years".

It would not say when nor commit to the same run of cities the Big Day Out (BDO) played to: Auckland, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and **Gold Coast**.

Campbell Smith, the promoter of the New Zealand event, tweeted yesterday: "Big Day Out on hiatus for 2015. A real shame for Auckland and NZ after an awesome 2014 gig, but we will be back."

C3 now wholly owns the BDO after Maddah's shares were transferred to the American **company** only nine months after Maddah took control of long-time co-owner Ken West's half of the business.

A source claimed debts incurred in the disastrous event in Australia this year, which reportedly lost between A\$9 **million** and A\$12m, had not been paid.

It was marred by record-low crowds, alleged unpaid debts to contractors and unhappy punters. West's business partner Vivian Lees sold his half to C3 in 2011, marking the end of an era for the much-loved festival.

Maddah is understood to be now focusing on the Soundwave heavy rock festival, one of Australia's most successful in recent years, although in a further blow to the 41-year-old music promoter, the hard rock Warped tour he brought to Australia will also not go ahead.

Peter Thorpe, general manager of the Sydney Showground, confirmed to the Sydney Morning Herald that the BDO would not be held at the venue next year.

"All I know is they cancelled the booking last week and we were told to release the date," Thorpe said. "It's very disappointing for the fans and for us because it's an iconic event. It was the first rock and roll event I went to and the first we held. I was there for 20 years at Paddington and we've been with it here ever since."

Dave Faulkner, from the Hoodoo Gurus, said the change to United States ownership might not be all bad, as long as C3 did resurrect the event from 2016.

"It seemed that the A J Maddah stewardship wasn't going so well," he said.

"The good thing is [American owners] can't take it away from Australia because the value they have is intrinsically here. **China** doesn't want the Big Day Out, does it?"

"Hopefully they will succeed and make a filthy big profit, because they will still be employing plenty of people here to run the shows. Running festivals is a rich man's game. While they create kingdoms and make grand decisions we can only hope the little people still get some crumbs off the table."

The Big Day Out made a triumphant return to Auckland this year after it was cancelled in 2013 due to increasing costs and low ticket sales.

The event, playing at the new Western Springs venue, was praised by critics and fans.

The Big Day Out first came to New Zealand in 1994 and ran for 18 years at Mt Smart Stadium before the 2013 break.

Declining ticket sales in 2012 meant the event was forced to downsize and headline act Kanye West was cancelled. Fairfax NZ

**NS** gcat : Political/General News

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