

Canberra, 'pretty boring place', until . . .

By JACQUELINE FULLER

Pearl Jam lead singer Eddie Vedder, left, last night further endeared himself to the hearts of almost 18,000 Generation X fans, below, when he smashed a microphone stand, drank out of a shoe that had landed on stage and commented that Canberra "looked like a pretty boring place — until you guys turned up".

Vedder had earlier in the night taken many of the crowd members by surprise when he stole on to the stage hours before scheduled to introduce the opening band, Cosmic

Psychos. Dressed in a sloppy joe, long-sleeved T-shirt and lime track-suit pants, Vedder unexpectedly returned to sing back-up vocals for the openers.

Many songs later after support band The Meanies left the Exhibition Park stage, fans greeted their hero as he led the other Pearl Jam members to the set with the chant "Eddie . . . Eddie . . . Eddie . . ." echoing around EPIC.

Ecstatic, with their eyes transfixed on the stage — bare but for a row of candles with a stark white backdrop — the keenest fans crowd-

surfed and shook their fists in the pit directly in front of the stage.

Caught up in the moment, people had their clothes torn from them before being thrown, willingly, over the security barricade into the arms of waiting guards.

They were chased and carried along to the end of the fencing where they were chastised, received first aid or fled to crowd-surf their way back from whence they came.

Further out the fans were more subdued, content to focus on Vedder, who was concealed from their gazes by a mop of brown hair.

But in a break between the grunge band's first song, *Even Flow*, and the second, *Last Exit*, Vedder's followers united in a screamed and whistled response when he asked: "How're you going?"

The bond between the "two" crowds continued throughout the concert, peaking when their collective voices drowned out that of Vedder during *Better Man* and the band's signature tune *Alive*.

The resulting sounds prompted residents in Hackett, Downer, North Lyneham and Kalceen to complain to police.