



ACT Government

BUDGET 2006-2007

MEDIA RELEASE

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BETTER ARTS FACILITIES FOR ALL THE COMMUNITY

A \$1.5 million upgrade of the Canberra Theatre Centre to make it more accessible to people with disabilities is part of an ongoing Government campaign to improve cultural facilities across the ACT.

The work will involve physical modifications to the Centre, including to the Canberra Theatre stage areas, to The Playhouse, to the Courtyard Studio, and to the Centre's administration area. Additional lifts will be installed and the existing Playhouse lift will be replaced. Stairs will be upgraded and toilet facilities improved.

Minister for the Arts Jon Stanhope said the modifications would ensure that people with disabilities were able to participate in the full range of activities at the Centre - not only as audience members, but as performers, in backstage roles, and as members of staff. Although specifically targeted towards people with disabilities, the works would also improve access for older members of the community, carers, and those with young children.

The improvements will complement measures the centre has already introduced to give people with special needs access to the performing arts, including live captioning and audio description programs. The work will also complement the improved physical access to the Centre's patron service areas which will result from the opening of the new Link later this year.

Mr Stanhope said the Government's network of arts facilities provided many exciting opportunities for engagement with the arts.

"The ACT Government will continue to support existing facilities, and plan for and build new facilities to meet the community's changing needs and to promote the arts. This year we will complete construction on the \$11.1 million Canberra Glassworks and we have previously allocated \$580,000 for the Centre's operations in 2006-07.

"The Civic Library and Link Project will also be completed in 2006, giving Canberrans a new, state-of-the-art library and community spaces, together with a large new Link area with upgraded facilities for theatre patrons. Significant work has also gone into planning for performing arts facilities in City West as a part of the ANU City West Integration Precinct.

"Work will continue on this collaboration in 2006-07. Planning work continues for the Belconnen Arts Centre on Ginninderra Lakeshore, with \$760,000 allocated so far for feasibility, forward and detailed design."

In 2006-07, \$259,000 has been allocated for repairs and maintenance of arts facilities and a further \$300,000 for capital upgrades, including for a package of works at arts venues managed by the Cultural Facilities Corporation.

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