



BUDGET 2008 - 2009 READY FOR THE FUTURE MEDIA RELEASE

No. 8

OVER \$10 MILLION FOR THE ARTS AND CULTURE

The ACT Government will invest over \$10 million to boost the arts in Canberra through a combination of capital works and a boost to the ACT Arts Fund, Chief Minister and Minister for the Arts, Jon Stanhope announced today.

The 2008-09 Budget will invest in the future of the Kingston Foreshore Arts Precinct; create new studios in the Watson Art Centre; provide an increase to the ACT Arts Fund; upgrade equipment at the Street Theatre in City West; provide funding for new public art through the Percent-for-art Scheme; and provide funding for development of a new Arts Action Statement. Funding will also be provided for upgrades to the Canberra Theatre, The Playhouse and for the Cultural Facilities Corporation for programs that provide access to cultural programs for disadvantaged groups and individuals.

“The ACT Government’s Canberra Glassworks was an exercise in adaptive reuse of an old site – the Canberra Powerhouse – which has proven to be highly successful,” Mr Stanhope said.

“The ACT Government is keen to expand the Kingston Foreshore area into an arts precinct as a key destination for locals and visitors, building on the famous Old Bus Depot Markets and the Canberra Glassworks.

“The 2008-09 Budget provides \$150,000 to fund the Kingston Foreshore Public Art Tower, in partnership with ActewAGL and other stakeholders. The sculpture will be an iconic symbol of the transformation of the Powerhouse to the Canberra Glassworks and the revitalisation of the Precinct.

“To make the Canberra Glassworks a more attractive entertainment area, particularly at night to cultivate the arts precinct, the ACT Government will be investing \$354,000 in 2008-09 to improve access and build a glass enclosure around the exterior of the Glassworks Café.

“The third investment into the Kingston Foreshore Arts Precinct will be a \$30,000 study to scope an appropriate use for the historic Fitters’ Workshop. The ACT Government hopes to find a use for the building that will benefit local artists and provide new opportunities for locals and visitors to engage with local arts activity.

“The Canberra Theatre Centre will also receive two significant enhancements, building on the ACT Government’s investment over the last few years in the Centre, including The Link and a number of disabled access improvements.

“The Playhouse will receive a \$320,000 upgrade to its acoustic sound system to ensure that it remains up to date with contemporary standards to remain a popular venue for performers.

“The ACT Government will also invest \$267,000 in 2008-09 in new signage for the Centre to promote upcoming performances, as well as providing a functional role by assisting patrons with safe and easy access to venue.

“The ACT Government will also be introducing a new four-part strategy to enable disadvantaged groups and individuals and those with special needs to access cultural programs at the Canberra Theatre Centre and Canberra Museum and Gallery. The strategy includes extending the Canberra Theatre Centre’s Community Ticket Scheme, extending support services to assist people with disabilities or special needs to experience live theatre and a range of other audience development programs, as well as a new program to provide arts education support for disadvantaged children.

“The Street Theatre will also benefit from \$250,000 over two years to upgrade aging equipment, while \$100,000 will be provided to install air-conditioning in two performing arts spaces at Gorman House Arts Centre.”

“The ACT Government, through artsACT, in collaboration with the ACT Cultural Council will be reviewing and updating Arts Canberra, the Government's Action Statement for the Arts. The 2008-2009 Budget provides \$250,000 to engage consultants with specialist arts and cultural expertise to provide input into this process, particularly exploring opportunities presented in the lead-up to Canberra's Centenary.

“The ACT Government will also help strengthen the arts in Canberra by providing an increase to the ACT Arts Fund including delivery, with an additional \$1.87 million over the next four years. The Arts Fund is one of the main ways the Government supports arts activity, through supporting individual artists, groups and arts organisations, as well as providing a range of awards and prizes.

“This will provide a major funding boost for local artists with a 9.7 per cent increase over four years in funding for the Arts Fund, with total funding for the ACT Arts Fund over the next four years totalling \$21.2 million.

“Design and planning for five new studios will also be funded at a cost of \$300,000 in 2008-09 for the Watson Arts Centre which will ultimately strengthen the facility as a centre for ceramic art. The new studios will provide the opportunity for local artists to further develop their skills while providing visiting artists with a space where they will be able to pass on their skills to our local artists.

“The 2008-09 Budget also provides \$5.3 million over four years for new artworks through the Percent-for-art Scheme. Funding will also be provided to ensure that public artworks commissioned under the Scheme are adequately maintained. The Percent-for-art Scheme will continue to build our community’s public art collection to bring the experience of art into the everyday life of all Canberrans,” Mr Stanhope said.

Statement ends

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**Enquiries: Penelope Layland
 Jess Wurf**

**6205 9777 0438 289 714 penelope.layland@act.gov.au
6205 0504 0411 772 700 jess.wurf@act.gov.au**