

Minister for the Arts
Question Time Briefs
March 2021

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CM2021/926

Portfolio/s: Arts

ISSUE: SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

Talking points:

- In addition to the over \$10 million provided annually to the sector in grants funding, the ACT Government provided more than \$7.6 million in total COVID-19 support for the Canberra arts sector to assist during these difficult times.
- More than \$7.3 million of this funding was new and included a series of grants for both individual artists and arts organisations as well as rent relief, new online events offerings, and fast track infrastructure projects.
- The next step in support for the sector is a Creative Recovery and Resilience program which has been designed to provide more income opportunities for artists, raise the profile of the arts, build skills and networks with other sectors, engage with the community, and enhance pride in our city.
- The initiatives to be delivered include:
 - opportunities for a new take on the artist in residency;
 - commissioning artists to use the city as a muse;
 - appointing an ACT Government artist;
 - amplifying the creative sector through showcasing Canberra artists and demonstrating the value of the arts to the community; and
 - the start of a creative recovery and resilience sector forum to provide ongoing opportunities to connect, share skills and knowledge, and collaborate.

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Contact Officer name: Sam Tyler Ext: 54365
Lead Directorate: Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

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Key Information

- Funding of \$375,000 for initiatives under the Creative Recovery and Resilience program were agreed in the August 2020 budget.
- The Creative Recovery and Resilience Program Officer commenced with artsACT on 22 February 2021.
- The arts sector has been impacted significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past six months support has been provided through grants to individuals, support for arts organisations, rent relief and additional capital works at arts facilities.
- Additional funding of \$2.5 million was provided to the Cultural Facilities Corporation (CFC) to support the ongoing employment for the CFC's large number of casual staff, especially at the Canberra Theatre Centre.
- The most recent weekly payroll jobs and wages data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that jobs in Arts and Recreation in the ACT have fallen 7.5% between 14 March 2020 and 13 February 2021.

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Portfolio: Arts

ISSUE: ANU FUNDING - SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN

Talking points:

- The ACT Government is aware that there are significant changes underway across the Australian National University.
- Some of those changes are related to the School of Art and Design and the School of Music.
- Any changes to the staffing structures and course delivery methodology is a decision for the ANU.

Key Information

- There were media reports on 23 November 2020 regarding changes to the staffing structure, workshop structure and course delivery at the ANU School of Art and Design.
- Reports indicate that there will be changes to the Gallery operations, Furniture, Jewellery and Object Workshops and a merger of the Glass and Ceramics workshops. It is also reported that the animation and video major is not going to continue. The proposals for change are outlined in a Managing Change Document in response to the ANU Recovery Plan adopted to deal with the financial impacts of COVID-19.
- The document outlines that despite eight years of reform, the School of Art and Design's position is unsustainable, operating with an annual operating budget deficit of \$2 million, which would be larger but for a direct subsidy from the University of over \$1 million a year. The ANU proposes a joint administration group and two management teams focusing on Operations and Technical support.
- The Minister for the Arts met with the then Head of School, Prof Denise Ferris, on 14 December 2020. The new Head of School is Dr Beck Davis. The Minister subsequently met with Professor Rae Frances, the Dean of Arts and Humanities at ANU on Tuesday 19 January 2021, to discuss the School of Art and Design.
- The Minister for the Arts is writing to the Federal Minister for the Arts about the impact of the proposed changes on the ACT arts sector and creative industries.

Background Information

- Community Outreach funding includes the ANU at \$679,000 for the School of Music and School of Art and Design; Canberra Symphony Orchestra and Llewellyn Hall at \$111,000; the Belconnen and Tuggeranong Arts Centres at \$190,000 each, \$25,000 to Ainslie Gorman Arts Centre to build capacity of individual artists, and \$110,500 for music capacity building to MusicACT.

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Portfolio: Arts

ISSUE: KINGSTON ARTS PRECINCT

Recent media:

- In a [Canberra Times article](#) dated 7 March 2021, the Chair of the ACT Heritage Council praised proponents of the Kingston Arts Precinct (KAP) for their early and regular engagement with Council.
- A previous [Canberra Times article](#) from 23 August 2020 suggested the National Capital Design Review Panel had concerns that the proponents had not engaged with Council on heritage issues.

Talking Points:

- Design work is progressing for the KAP to provide purpose-built facilities for a number of Canberra's visual arts organisations as well as private mixed-use development.
- Phase 3 of the design development process, Tender Concepts Estate Development Plan (TCEDP), is nearing completion. Geocon and their design team have submitted updated drawings, articulating amendments to earlier versions, that reflect 2020 engagement outcomes.
- The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) is currently reviewing the TCEDP to ensure that the design development sufficiently meets engagement outcomes, identify risk areas, further engagement and design progress required before entering the next phase of the project.
- The TCEDP will be publicly available once reviewed by the SLA, anticipated for the first half of 2021.
- A number of circumstances arose during 2020, causing project delays. The SLA is working with Geocon to minimise any possible delay to the practical completion of Government assets, scheduled for 2023.

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Key Information

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- Throughout 2019-21, Geocon's design team have engaged regularly with stakeholders including the National Capital Design Review Panel, the ACT Heritage Council, arts organisations, and the project's Community Panel.
- The following key changes have been made to the masterplan based on feedback from these stakeholders: retention of the 1948 Switch Room (the Chapel); widening views to the Powerhouse from Wentworth Avenue; introduction of a green forecourt and retention of heritage trees on Wentworth Avenue; and improved views of the Powerhouse to and from Eastlake Parade and Bowen Park.
- The SLA, artsACT and Geocon have been working together to introduce a 'place-led' focus for the design of the public domain. This process includes consulting with the Community Panel, arts organisations and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to establish a place vision for the precinct.

Heritage

- In December 2019, ACT Heritage Council (Council) requested an updated Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Kingston Powerhouse Historic Precinct. artsACT engaged Philip Leeson Architects (PLA) to update the CMP. The draft CMP was submitted to the Council for review in November 2020. Feedback was provided to PLA in January 2021 and the comments are being incorporated into a revised draft.
- The SLA has also commissioned PLA to write a Statement of Heritage Effects (SHE), for submission to the Council, for works which may diminish the heritage significance of the place.
- Separate to the CMP and SHE approval, the Council will consider the proposed development as part of its role in the approval process for the Estate Development Plan Development Application.

Organisations

- The visual arts organisations relocating to the precinct are Canberra Contemporary Art Space; Canberra Glassworks; Craft ACT; M16 Artspace; Megalo Print Studio + Gallery and PhotoAccess.
- A new art space for Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will also be built. artsACT is consulting with ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about the function, structure and design of this space.
- The Canberra Potters' Society and ArtSound FM were included as organisations who could inhabit the precinct but have since decided not to relocate.

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- Arts organisations have signed a Deed of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest to ensure the protection of Confidential Information. Organisations are not limited in discussing their involvement in the project or information that is publicly available.
- Arts organisations have worked collaboratively to agree on their preferred locations and required spaces within the precinct.

Ownership, Management and Licences

- The ACT Government assets will include purpose-built arts facilities, residential accommodation for visiting artists, a multi-storey carpark; retail activation and outdoor event space for up to 5,000 people.
- artsACT will be the precinct manager for a period of 5 years in the first instance.
- artsACT is liaising with ACT Property Group about the future management and maintenance of territory assets.
- Arts organisations will have a peppercorn rental arrangement with the precinct manager, consistent with other existing arrangements for arts facilities. Each organisation will be responsible for paying a sub-licence fee which will cover operational costs including utilities, security, cleaning etc.

Background Information

- The Kingston Arts Precinct is the final stage in the ongoing development of the Kingston Foreshore, which began in 1995.
- In 2017 a consortium of Geocon Group Pty Ltd, Fender Katsalidis Architects and Oculus Landscape Architecture + Design was announced as the successful tenderer for the development, following a two-stage tender process which began in 2015. Phase 1 of the project was completed in 2019, with the exchange of contracts and agreements between the SLA and Geocon. Phase 2 (Tender Concepts Release) was completed at the end of 2019.

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Portfolio: Arts

ISSUE: ARTS ACTIVITY FUNDING 2021 ROUND

Talking points:

- A total of \$870,000 is available through both *Up to \$5k Arts Activities* and the *\$5k to \$50k Arts Activities* funding each year.
- The first round of \$5-50k Arts Activities funding for 2021 opened on 1 December 2020 and closed on 28 February 2021. 57 applications were received.
- Applications to this round will be assessed by a peer panel process, and the outcome will be announced by 31 May 2021.
- Arts Activities funding rounds are always highly competitive. There were 14 successful applications in the second *\$5k to \$50k* round for 2020 across a range of artforms.
- The total value of that round of funding was \$325,000.
- Applicants who are not successful are encouraged to seek feedback on their applications and apply again.
- Information for successful applicants is available on the artsACT website, www.arts.act.gov.au
- The *Up to \$5k Arts Activities* funding is available all year round.

Key Information

- Arts Activities Funding is made up of two categories. The *Up to \$5k* funding category and the *\$5k to \$50k* funding category.
- Applications to Arts Activities funding are open to Canberra based artists and arts groups for one-off projects across dance, literature, music, theatre and visual arts.
- Arts Activities funding supports the funding aims of arts development, participation and access and arts opportunities. Projects are diverse and can include creating and presenting new work, community engagement activities, attendance at residencies, and skills development.

\$5k to \$50k Arts Activities

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- artsACT received 57 eligible applications for 2021 Round One of \$5-50k Arts Activities funding, requesting a total of \$1,280,223.
- artsACT received 74 eligible applications for 2020 Round Two of \$5-50k Arts Activities funding, requesting a total of \$1,568,148.
- *\$5-50k Arts Activities* funding is open twice a year with set dates.
 - Round One opens 1 December, closes 28 February and is announced by 30 May.
 - Round Two opens 1 June, closes 31 July and is announced by 31 October.
- Applications are assessed against the funding aims and criteria by two expert peer panels drawn from the local arts sector.
- There is a budget of \$325,000 available for each of the 2020-2021 *\$5-50k Arts Activities Funding* rounds.

Up To \$5k Arts Activities

- Since 1 July 2020, artsACT has approved 35 applications in the *Up To \$5k Arts Activities* round at a total of \$133,000. artsACT normally receives about 8 to 10 applications per month and has a budget to approve about 3-4 per month.
- *Up To \$5k Arts Activities* funding operates on a rolling, year-round basis.
- Applications for the *Up to \$5k* funding category are assessed by artsACT staff against the funding aims and criteria. Each application is assessed by two staff members and reviewed by the Director of Arts Programs, who makes a recommendation for approval by the Executive Branch Manager, artsACT. This ensures a fair and transparent process.
- The current *Up to \$5k* funding category has an allocated budget of \$220,000 for the 2020-21 financial year, similar to previous years. This budget supports approximately 50 applications per year.

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Portfolio: Arts

ISSUE: Former Transport Depot, Kingston

Recent media:

- A media release about the lead dust finding at the building was issued on 11 February 2021, resulting in general media coverage locally on the same day, <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7122839/lead-dust-found-at-site-of-old-bus-depot-markets/>
- A media enquiry received on 12 March 2021 from The Canberra Times resulted in an article that covered lead blood level testing of workers, the anticipated cost and timing of remediation, and also mentions lead dust at several ACT public schools.
<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7165339/workers-tested-after-lead-dust-exposure/?cs=14225>
 - Lead dust was disturbed by construction activities, which may have caused an exposure risk to workers on site.
 - Workers have worked in areas where lead dust is present.
 - The head contractor has offered blood tests to measure lead blood levels to workers on a voluntary basis. Twenty-four people have been tested.
 - Results received do not indicate exposure to high levels of lead.
 - The cost of remediation of the Former Transport Depot is likely to be upwards of \$650,000 excluding GST.
 - A detailed program is pending, with completion of remediation targeted for May 2021.
 - The markets will be delayed in reopening until remediation is completed. artsACT meets with the market operator weekly.
 - artsACT is consulting with the Education Directorate for consistency in lead dust management and information sharing.

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Talking points:

- The \$6.5 million (GST incl) major capital works project to improve the safety, accessibility and sustainability of the facility is close to completion. Upgrades include new roofing, new lighting, and a new electrical system as well as public toilet upgrades to meet current accessibility standards.
- The Former Transport Depot (FTD) is home to the Old Bus Depot Markets. Iconic Markets and Events Pty Ltd operates the Old Bus Depot Markets on a weekly basis at the Former Transport Depot under a licence agreement with the Territory.
- The Markets have been closed since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The construction works were scheduled prior to public health restrictions being in place.
- Testing of dust present in the building in late January 2021 found lead particulates.
- Correspondence has been received from stallholders concerned about the markets remaining closed. Some stallholders have stock stored in the building.
 - Stallholder stock and/or equipment has been impacted by lead dust.
 - artsACT is working with the market operator to develop a process to evaluate the impact on stallholder stock/equipment and communicate this to stallholders. These communications are expected to start in the next few weeks.
- An environmental consultant is engaged to ensure the safety of contractors completing work on site.
- Remediation will be required before the building can re-open. A specialist remediation contractor has been engaged by the builder.
- It is likely that the lead dust has been present with minimal disturbance at the Former Transport Depot for many years.

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- Expert advice received is that when left undisturbed and good personal hygiene practiced, the dust does not pose a significant risk to building users including market operators and visitors.
- Megalo Print Studio occupies the Wentworth Offices which adjoins the Former Transport Depot upper hall. As part of the upgrade works the roof at Megalo has been replaced. Lead dust was discovered in the Megalo ceiling space in December 2020. As the lead particulates were contained within the ceiling space, this issue was managed as part of standard construction Work, Health and Safety procedures and work on the Megalo roof replacement continued.
- Megalo staff have reoccupied its premises and are fully operational in their spaces again.

Key Information

- artsACT is the building custodian, ACT Property Group provides building management (repairs and maintenance) and Major Projects Canberra (MPC), Infrastructure Delivery Partners is the contract manager and delivery agency for the capital works project.
- On 25 November 2020 there was a safety incident at Megalo Print Studio Roof Replacement works where a vent which was not adequately supported within the roof structure dropped into an occupied space. No one was hurt, and Worksafe ACT was notified and conducted an investigation.
- Major Projects Canberra worked with Monarch Building Services on WHS procedures.
- As a result of 25 November 2020 incident, Major Projects Canberra instructed works to cease until thorough investigations in structure, hazardous materials, electrical wiring, and mechanical services could be completed.
- On 17 December 2020 artsACT was advised by Major Projects Canberra that dust found in the ceiling space at Megalo Print Studio contained lead particles. The dust was well contained in the ceiling space, and did not cause a risk to occupants as long as it remained undisturbed.
- In early January 2021 the lead dust in the Meglao Print Studio was removed around access hatches for maintenance purposes; and encapsulated in other areas. The dust was not disturbed during construction and did not cause an exposure risk.
- On 20 January 2021, Major Projects Canberra was advised that in the course of undertaking the construction works, dust samples collected from the Former Transport Depot were analysed and showed the presence of lead particles.
- Worksafe were notified of the situation on 20 January 2021 and have provided advice to Major Projects Canberra.

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QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- The contractor, Monarch Building Solutions, is coordinating an appropriate response to this in accordance with the construction contract and the relevant legislation.
- Information was provided to the Minister for the Arts Office on 21 January 2021.
- From 20-22 January 2021, air monitoring test points were set up by the contractor inside the building. All results returned show that the concentration of atmospheric lead was below the detection limit and that the building is safe work in observing the guidelines provided by the environmental consultant.
- The contractor has continued to undertake construction works in accordance with guidelines provided by the hazardous materials expert (Hygienist) including the air monitoring.
- Further clarification is being sought about the process and methodologies for remediation to remove the lead dust from the site in coordination with the construction program. There will be a delay to the completion of the construction program as a result of the remediation required. The preliminary indication is a three month delay to the building reopening.
- The Old Bus Depot Market operators, Iconic, were informed of the current situation in a meeting on 4 February 2021 and do not currently have access to the building. Weekly meetings are being held with Iconic since, and will continue while the remediation occurs. Megalo have also been kept advised of relevant information and will continue to be updated as new information is available.
- Megalo staff reoccupied the print studio following final (precautionary) clearance testing results.

Background Information

- Iconic Markets received rent relief from the ACT Government during the pandemic closure due to the significant economic impact on its business operations.

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Portfolio: Arts

ISSUE: Public Art - Representation of Women

Recent Media:

- Recent Media attention has focused on the lack of representation of women in public art works including a petition by Jasiri International.
<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7054881/civic-gets-statue-of-constitutions-founding-father/>
<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7056503/it-is-appropriate-nca-chief-defends-new-civic-statue/>
<https://m.facebook.com/abccanberra/posts/what-do-you-think-of-canberras-newest-statueandrew-inglis-clark-helped-draft-the/10159440003087125/>
<https://canberraweekly.com.au/monumental-women-petition-aims-to-smash-the-bronze-ceiling/>

Talking points:

- Historically, male artists have dominated the practice of sculpture in Australia. This is reflected in the make-up of the ACT Government's collection. Of the 117 artworks in the collection managed by artsACT, 83 artworks are by male artists, 24 works by female artists and 11 by male and female artists working together.
- The issue of women's representation in public art in Canberra (as both artists and subjects) has recently been brought to the attention of the community with the commissioning of the Andrew Inglis Clark artwork commissioned by the developers of the Constitution Place site, Capital Airport Group (CAG).
- Andrew Inglis Clark was the preferred artwork subject for the Constitution Avenue location because of his co-authorship of the Australian Constitution. The commission for the Andrew Inglis Clark work, *Windswept*, went to an emerging Australian female artist, April Pine.

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- A petition to celebrate the accomplishments of women through sculpture and place names in the ACT has been lodged with the ACT Assembly and is being sponsored by Suzanne Orr MLA. The petition closes on 1 May 2021. As of 15 March 2021, there were 68 signatories.
- There is a proposal for women to be recognised in public art as part of the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement 2020. The proposal is for a co-designed Women's Walk of artwork by, for and about women located at the Acton Waterfront, West Basin.
- There have not been any decisions made on future commissioning of public art by the ACT Government.

Key Information

- Public art owned and managed by the ACT Government has been commissioned or acquired by the Territory or gifted by an individual or private entity. Work that is commissioned or acquired is funded via the ACT Budget process. There is no funding currently available for new public art commissions or acquisitions to be managed by artsACT although other ACT Government agencies do commission works on occasion as part of capital works projects.
- Women artists make up 20 per cent of the public art collection managed by artsACT. This is below state galleries and museums nationally, which recorded 34 per cent representation of women artists in collections, and below the 51 per cent representation at 48 public galleries across Australia (Countess Report, 2019).
- The Women's Walk proposal is listed as an initiative under the ACT Greens' Policy Platform for the 10th ACT Legislative Assembly (Appendix 5, Parliamentary and Governing Agreement). Item 2.6 states: *'Fund a co-designed 'Women's Walk' of artwork by, for and about women at the West Basin precinct'*.
- Should the Women's Walk be supported by the ACT Government, a co-design process could be employed to determine what form the project would take. That is, who should be represented in the Women's Walk, why and in what form (at a general principle level). Findings from the co-design process would inform an artist brief for the Women's Walk.
- The suggested location for a Women's Walk is the Acton Waterfront. The planning and development of the Acton Waterfront is the responsibility of the City Renewal

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Authority and includes a proposed four-hectare urban park as shown in the revised Acton Waterfront Masterplan. This could be a possible location for the Women's Walk.

Background Information

- Men are subjects in 17 public artworks and women in eight public artworks commissioned by artsACT. Furthermore, of the six figurative artworks (commemorative) in the collection managed by artsACT, one is of a woman (a bust of the poet Judith Wright by artist Cathy Weiszmann) and the others are male subjects – three former Prime Ministers and two local poets.
- The petition to celebrate the accomplishments of women has been lodged with the ACT Assembly by Jasiri Australia (social enterprise supporting young women future leaders). It was posted on 22 February 2021 and closes on 1 May 2021. The petition requests to: promote equality and diversity in the people recognised through public commemoration; increase the prominence of women in place naming conventions across the territory; and identify opportunities to increase the representation of women, especially of diverse backgrounds and First Nations leaders in our public statues.

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Portfolio: Arts

ISSUE: Gorman House Arts Centre – Lead Dust Finding

Recent media:

- There has not been any media specifically related to lead dust findings at Gorman House Arts Centre.
- There is, however, strong media interest in hazardous materials in ACT Government owned buildings. Recent focus has been on lead dust in Canberra schools and at the Former Transport Depot, Kingston:

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7170894/lead-dust-recently-found-in-11-schools-as-list-of-affected-campuses-is-revealed/>

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7165339/workers-tested-after-lead-dust-exposure/>

Talking points

- Lead dust particles have been found in two vacant artist studios at Gorman House Arts Centre during the recent refurbishment of these rooms. The presence of lead particles is understood to be the result of lead paint on the timber window frames being disturbed over time by window operation.
- The test report was received on 18 March 2021 and showed that no airborne lead dust or floor surface lead dust was present, but that high levels of lead dust were found on two window sills that were tested. All rooms tested have been deemed safe to occupy by qualified environmental consultants.
- Cleaning to remove the lead dust particles in the two studio spaces is underway. The lead paint in these spaces will be remediated and monitored.
- Lead paint is present throughout Ainslie and Gorman House Arts Centres and is managed in accordance with the Arts Centres' Hazardous Materials Registers.
- Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres were built in the 1920s. Just like homes and businesses of the time these facilities were painted with lead paint, which was commonly used before 1992.

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- Lead paint is typically found on timber surfaces including window frames, eaves, and handrails, but it has also been found in storage, plant and equipment rooms. Expert advice has been provided that when left undisturbed and good personal hygiene practised, dust does not pose a significant risk to building users.
- Following the finding of lead dust particles in the artist studios at Gorman House Arts Centre, a risk assessment process is being completed to guide the highest priority spaces for cleaning, remediation and clearance testing throughout Ainslie and Gorman House Arts Centres.
- A program for cleaning and testing as well as remediation works is being developed in response to this risk assessment. Testing has commenced in spaces where young children attend music and dance classes.

Key Information

- artsACT is the building custodian, Arts Capital Limited occupy and operate Ainslie and Gorman House Arts Centres under a licence agreement with the Territory.
- Various spaces at each facility are exclusively occupied by sublicense holders including QL2 Dance, Canberra Youth Theatre and Music for Everyone. Other spaces are hired to the community on a casual basis.
- Worksafe ACT was notified of the test results on 19 March 2021. The presence of lead dust is not a notifiable incident in the ACT. Robson Environmental provided expert advice on this matter.
- Verbal advice was provided to the Minister for the Arts Office on 16 March 2021.

Background Information

- Arts Capital Limited (operators of Ainslie and Gorman House Arts Centres) received rent relief from the ACT Government during the pandemic closure due to the significant economic impact on its business operations.
- Arts Capital provided advice about the lead dust to its tenants (sublicense holders) on 19 March 2021:
<https://mailchi.mp/90f537d47d43/lead-paint-at-ainslie-and-gorman-arts-centres?e=bf6b5cf019>
- ACT Health has recently released a fact sheet about lead exposure:
<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/population-health/fact-sheets>

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