

Minister for the Arts
Question Time Briefs
February 2021

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CM2021/288

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 focus on employment and economic stimulus for the arts. It will 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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Cleared by: Deputy Director-General
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 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 13% between 14 March 2020 and 2 January 2021.

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CM21/4258

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 and School of Music.
- 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.
- On Tuesday 19 January 2021, Minister Cheyne met with Rae Frances, the Dean of arts and humanities at ANU to discuss the School of Art.

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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CM21/4259

Portfolio: Arts**ISSUE: KINGSTON ARTS PRECINCT****Talking points:**

- Delivery of the Kingston Arts Precinct is progressing, with detailed design work and community and stakeholder engagement underway.
- In November 2020, Geocon submitted the Tender Concepts Estate Development Plan (TCEDP) to the Surburban Land Agency (SLA) for endorsement. Following endorsement, the TCEDP will be made public and the next stage of the development process and stakeholder engagement will commence.
- Construction will begin following the completion of the design phase in 2021-22. Practical completion is anticipated mid 2023.
- The design team have made the following key changes to the masterplan based on feedback from community and stakeholders to date: retention of the 1948 Switch Room; improvement of views to the Powerhouse from Wentworth Avenue; introduction of a green forecourt and retention of heritage trees on Wentworth Avenue; and improved views to and from Eastlake Parade and Bowen Park.
- The organisations relocating to the precinct are Canberra Contemporary Art Space; Canberra Glassworks; Craft ACT; M16 Artspace; Megalo Print Studio + Gallery and PhotoAccess.

Key Information

- The ACT Government assets 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.
- The Canberra Potters' Society and ArtSound FM were included as organisations who could inhabit the precinct but have since decided not to relocate.
- A new art space for Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community will also be built. artsACT is currently consulting with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community about the function, structure and design of this space.
- ACT Property Group will be the custodians of the Territory assets, responsible for the repairs and maintenance of these assets, utilising revenue from the carpark.

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- artsACT will be the precinct manager for a period of 5 years in the first instance.
- Organisations will have a peppercorn rental arrangement with the precinct manager.

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.
- In 2019 an agreement was signed for Geocon to deliver the \$78 million ACT Government assets, as well as private mixed-use development.
- 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 community to establish the place vision for the precinct.
- An outline of community and stakeholder activities undertaken during the initial Tender Concepts Release phase and subsequent TCEDP phase of the project are publicly available on the SLA's website.
- The design team have presented to the National Capital Design Review Panel and ACT Heritage Council several times throughout 2019-2020, incorporating feedback into their evolving designs.
- In December 2019, ACT Heritage Council requested an updated Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Kingston Powerhouse Historic Precinct. artsACT, as custodians, engaged Philip Leeson Architects to update the CMP. The draft CMP was submitted to the ACT Heritage Council for review in November 2020. Feedback was provided to PLA in January 2021 and the comments are being incorporated into a revised draft.
- Separate to the CMP approval, the ACT Heritage Council will consider the proposed development as part of its role in the approval process for the Estate Development Plan Development Application.
- Design work provided to the arts organisations remains the intellectual property of Geocon's design team and forms part of their commercial offer provided to the Territory in response to tender requirements. 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.

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CM2021/288

Portfolio: Arts

ISSUE: ARTS ACTIVITY FUNDING 2020 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 second round of *\$5k to \$50k Arts Activities* funding for 2020 opened on 1 June 2020 and closed on 31 July. In most years this second round would be announced by 31 October but in 2020 was announced in late November 2020.
- As is usual practice during caretaker, the peer assessment process was undertaken, but not finalised until after caretaker. As a result the announcement of grant recipients was delayed.
- Arts Activities funding rounds are always highly competitive and there were 14 successful applications in the second *\$5k to \$50k* round for 2020 across a range of artforms.
- The total value of this recent round of funding was \$325,000.
- I have congratulated the successful applicants and I encourage those who were not successful to seek feedback on their applications and apply again.
- Information for successful applicants is available on the artsACT website, www.arts.act.gov.au
- A new round of *\$5k to \$50k Arts Activities* funding opened on 1 December, closes on 28 February and will be announced by 30 May 2021.
- The *Up to \$5k Arts Activities* funding is available all year round, but was paused during caretaker. Applications are now being assessed and grant recipients are being advised of the outcome.

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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

- 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 30 applications in the *Up To \$5k Arts Activities* round at a total of \$118,345. 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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CM2021/288

Portfolio: Arts

ISSUE: Former Transport Depot, Kingston

Talking points:

[note: information about lead detection not publicly released (as at 5 Feb)]

- Major upgrades are underway at the Former Transport Depot (FTD) in Kingston, home to the Old Bus Depot Markets, to improve the safety, accessibility and sustainability of the facility. The \$6.5 million (GST incl) capital works project is close to completion and includes a new roof, new lighting, and a new electrical system as well as public toilet upgrades to meet current accessibility standards.
- Recent testing of dust that may have been disturbed by the construction activities has found lead particles, and further testing is now underway to determine the process and methods for the building clean to remove the lead dust from the site safely.
- An environmental consultant has been engaged to ensure the safety of workers on site. Air monitoring shows the dust is not currently detectable in the air and therefore the risk to contractors working on the site is considered low. A full clean of all surfaces is however required after construction completion and before building re-opening.
- 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. ACT Government is liaising with the market operators and stallholders on the clean-up operations and to reassure them about their health and safety.
- It is likely that the lead dust has been present with minimal disturbance at the Former Transport Depot for many years. When left undisturbed and good personal hygiene practiced, the dust does not pose a significant risk to building users including market operators and visitors.
- The Markets have been closed since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- The Markets reopening date will be delayed by the site clean up and is yet to be confirmed .
- Megalo Print Studio occupies the Wentworth Offices which adjoins the Former Transport Depot upper hall. As a part of the upgrade works the roof at Megalo is also being replaced. Lead dust was discovered in the Megalo ceiling space in December 2020. As the lead particles 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.
- The Megalo print studio has also been tested for surface and airborne lead and levels are within a safe range. The ceiling space is well sealed and the risk of exposure to building occupants is considered low.

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.

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QUESTION TIME BRIEF

- Worksafe were notified of the situation on 20 January 2021 and have provided advice to Major Projects Canberra.
- 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 to occupy.
- 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 may be a delay to the completion of the construction program as a result of the cleaning required.
- 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 will be held with Iconic while the remediation occurs. Megalo have also been kept advised of relevant information and will continue to be updated as new information is available.

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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