



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked By: Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Addressed to: Minister for the Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy

Reference: Arts

Hearing Date: 31 July 2024

In relation to: Canberra Theatre Centre

QON lodgement Date: 1 August 2024

Answer Due date: 8 August 2024

- 1) Why were a new works programme chosen to be the only effort in supporting the local theatre industry?
- 2) Of those employed for new works, what percentage of those actually live and work in the ACT?
- 3) Are any new works developments planned to go into production for ACT citizens to watch and enjoy?
- 4) How are the 'experts' chosen to support the work being developed and why are these experts mostly from outside of the ACT?
- 5) Of the millions provided over several budgets for the redevelopment, what percentage of those funds has gone to creatives or has all the funding gone to builders and bureaucrats?

Tara Cheyne MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The Cultural Facilities Corporation (CFC), an independent body with a governing board, advises:

- 1) Canberra Theatre Centre (CTC) supports the local theatre industry in a range of ways in addition to the New Works Program. For example, we offer rental subsidies, and supported access to technical, front of house, marketing and box office for local companies including: Canberra Youth Theatre, QL2 Dance, Australian Dance Party, Lucid Theatre Co, You Are Here Canberra, and Heart Strings Theatre Co.

CTC also supports the local industry through purchase of productions, such as Heart String Theatre Co's *The Hello Girls* (2023) and House of Sand's *Manage Your Expectations* (2024). CTC pays artist fees and covers presentation costs.

We also provide local artists opportunities to connect with the international and national arts community. Recent examples include an Akram Kahn Company workshops with QL2 Dance, and a Circa workshop with Warehouse Circus.

CTC supports local organisations and artists in their "Canberra Spotlight" section of our e-news which is sent to over 120,000 people, and on their social media channels.

- 2) At least 60% of artists employed as part of the New Works Program live and work in the ACT. We also strategically employ artists from outside the region, as it is essential that ACT-based artists are connected to a national network of practice. In this way we are contributing to building sustainable careers for our local artists.
- 3) Since 2021 when the New Works Program was launched, CTC has presented a number of works written, devised, choreographed or performed by ACT-based artist works that have been promoted and available for Canberrans to enjoy.

So far in 2024, this has included *Manage Your Expectations* by Eliza Sanders in the Courtyard Studio.

The CTC has also supported the presentations by local artists and companies. In 2024, this has included:

- *Canberra Youth Theatre*
– *Work, But This Time Like You Mean it*
 - QL2 Dance
– *Subject to Change*
 - Australian Dance Party
– *Co_Lab: 24*
- 4) The nationally recognised experts chosen to mentor local artists are selected for their significant reputations and capacity to act as an effective mentor to another artist. They are asked to give valuable guidance and support in their specific art form. For example, Canberra Drag King Charlie Wan was mentored by Emma Maye Gibson aka Betty Grumble. Gibson is an artist of significance experience and professionalism and has decades of experience in this space and could offer character development and workshopping of future performance ideas. Charlie said of the experience “*to call it a gift is an understatement*”.

Mentors from across the country give Canberra artists access to national networks, an asset that supports them to grow their practice outside of the ACT (if that is what they are interested in), and goes a long way to change the perception in the national arts community that theatre works of significance are not made in the ACT.

- 5) Major Projects Canberra (MPC) is responsible for the procurement and delivery of the ACT’s top tier infrastructure projects, including planning, design, and construction.

For the Canberra Theatre Redevelopment project, MPC engages and manages specialist contractors such as architects, theatre planners and builders who are highly experienced, having proven their ability to deliver on other major infrastructure projects locally and around the world. To date:

- Design has commenced with the engagement of the design partner lead by Architectus, Henning Larsen and Arup, following an international design competition;
- Consultation and engagement has occurred with the Canberra community through a YourSay consultation in late 2023 and directly with representatives of local communities including from First Nations, multicultural, disability, LGBTQIA+, and youth communities.
- A Performing Arts Reference Group was established in 2023 and includes representatives from the local performing arts sector. Performing Arts Reference Group members receive a stipend for attending meetings.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tara Cheyne', written in a cursive style.

Date:

7/8/24

By the Minister for the Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, Tara Cheyne MLA