



Jon Stanhope MLA

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MINISTER FOR THE ARTS AND HERITAGE

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

2008-09 Annual Report Hearings

Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs

Question on Notice Arts 13

Question to the Minister for the Arts and Heritage –

In relation to the Canberra Theatre – the Cultural Facilities Corporation, in its 2008-09 annual report, reported a decline in audience number at the Canberra Theatre during 2008-09:

- Is this indicative of audience numbers across the territory? If yes, what is artsACT doing to address the decline?

Mr Stanhope: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The Canberra Theatre Centre experienced lower than expected patron numbers in 2008-09 compared with 2007-08 and 2006-07. It should be noted that year-on-year theatre patron numbers are inherently variable and are influenced by such factors as the availability of product to tour to Canberra in any given year.

In 2008-09 there appeared to be a decline in confidence felt by theatre promoters seeking to come to Canberra during the year, related to impacts from the Global Financial Crisis at that time. Discussions with commercial promoters last year revealed that they were being conservative with the product that they were touring, which resulted in a reduction in the product presented at the Canberra Theatre Centre as a result of the Global Financial Crisis.

The contraction in commercial promoters taking risks impacted on the Canberra Theatre Centre's audience numbers because approximately 80% of the product on the Centre's stage is venue hire business rather than being programmed by the Centre. Other venues in Canberra that program a greater percentage of their available time would have noticed a lesser effect.

The decline in audience numbers at the Canberra Theatre Centre is not indicative of general audience numbers in Canberra. Information provided to artsACT by Key Arts Organisations indicated that, on balance, theatre audiences in the ACT remain strong when compared to other Australian jurisdictions.

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Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs

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Date: