



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2025–2026 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2025–2026

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Mr Alex Budd, Director Canberra Theatre Centre, Cultural Facilities Corporation

In relation to: Cultural Facilities Corporation and Canberra Theatre—Local talent

Hearing: 30 July 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 5-6

Transcript provided: 31 July 2025

Answer Due: 08 August 2025

Mr Alex Budd took on notice the following question(s):

MS CLAY: Thank you. Mr Ramsay, I am interested in how the CFC integrates with the local art scene, and just wondering if you have given any consideration to building a local crew and local skills and capacity for Canberra Theatre travelling shows?

Mr Ramsay: Thanks, Ms Clay. I will hand to Mr Budd for that one but as general introduction, one of the key things that we have a very strong focus on in the Cultural Facilities Corporation, not just in theatre but also in galleries, museums and heritage, is the fostering and the support of local arts, local artists. We have a range of ways of being able to develop pathways to employment as well as fostering the arts themselves, and Mr Budd, I think, is probably well-placed to be able to talk about some of the things, not all of the things today, but yes, some of the great ways of doing that.

Mr Budd: Thank you, Mr Ramsay. Ms Clay, yes, our new works program which we initiated during the pandemic last year has engaged 214 local artists across all of its activities. 48 artists have been paid through the new works program, and a total of 15 works have been supported through development and presentation in that program, and 85 per cent of our budget that we spend in new works is spent directly on local and local associated artists.

To the second part of your question regarding travelling productions from the ACT, we—

MS CLAY: Travelling productions to the ACT.

Mr Budd: You meant productions to the ACT?

MS CLAY: Yes, probably travelling productions to the ACT and whether there is any pipeline or integration for the technical skills and the crew working there?

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Mr Budd: I mean, we are the biggest employer of technical and front-of-house staff in the territory. We continue our relationship with CIT in offering a Cert 4 production course which has really borne a lot of fruit in the last 12 months in people coming from that course and ending up working on our stage.

We have seen a number of our staff move on from working with us on to touring shows, but we are certainly—like there is not a formal program at the moment; however, it is something we are looking at closely in the work that we know we need to do over the next few years as we build towards this next Lyric Theatre to raise the capacity of our staff and to have them have experience in other venues outside of Canberra.

MS CLAY: That is great. You rattled off some numbers there and I did not quite keep up with all of them. You employ 214 artists but 48 of them were paid. Did I hear that right?

Mr Budd: I would actually like to take on notice coming back to you because the notes, I was reading that to you, and I thought that sounds a little odd. I will clarify exactly what that is.

MS CLAY: Can you clarify all those numbers you read—how many artists you engaged in both the—in the Canberra Theatre I think, and how many were paid, and you also rattled off a percentage of local talent involved in the shows. Like take that on notice. That would be fantastic.

ALEX BUDD: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Summary of Canberra Theatre's support for local artists in 2024-25

New Works and artist engagement

- 15 local works supported through development of presentation
- 246 artist connections through creative development programs, one-on-one engagement or artist chats, professional mentorship, networking events, and presentation of local independent productions.
 - The program also hosted three local sector meetups with ACT venue staff and three industry knowledge building and networking events towards sector development and capacity building for artists in the ACT with national partners
 - Around 35 local artists and arts workers participate in the Chips Dips and Sips each event (three events in last fin year) – local artist capacity building and networking program
 - Collaboration with Ausdance ACT on New Works creative development and dance workshops for local artists
 - Capacity building opportunities offered to local artist via 48 one on one artist chats (one hour in duration) to get to know local artists and hear about their work or provide advice.

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- Delivered the inaugural First Nations Artist in Residence, a ten-month program of mentorship and producer development with a selected local First Nations artist.

Artist employment and payments

- 49 artists paid through New Works, including 27 local artists.
- 85% of New Works expenditure went directly to artists and arts workers.

Local company and artist support (beyond New Works)

- 54 (around 30%) of venue hirer contracts were with local companies, representing 309 nights (44%) of total venue usage.
- Supported Canberra Youth Theatre, Ausdance ACT Youth Dance Festival, and Canberra Symphony Orchestra through multiple presentations and collaborations.

Local artist employment (beyond New Works)

- 5 local acts used as support musicians
- 15 Local artists employed during Open Day (musicians and performers)
- 3 Local artists employed for Carmen/60th birthday music
- 14 Local artists employed for ACT UP!

Capacity-building and sector development


- Collaborations with Ausdance ACT on dance workshops
- Collaboration with Canberra Youth Theatre on their Young Critics program
- Canberra Symphony Orchestra engaged in multiple cross-organisation projects.

Local Company Support (in addition to New Works)

- Presentation of Canberra Youth Theatre's *Work, But This Time Like You Mean It*
- Presentation of Ausdance ACT *Youth Dance Festival*
- Canberra Symphony Orchestra was involved in several projects – including playing for The Australia Ballet's *Carmen*, and *Mimi's Symphony*.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates

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Signature:  Date: 1.8.25
By the Chair of the Board of the Cultural Facilities Corporation, Dr Mathew Trinca