

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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ART DECO REVAMP: CHARLTON'S REX THEATRE TO BE TRANSFORMED

The Andrews Labor Government is backing the transformation of an 83-year-old art deco theatre in the state's north west, putting arts and culture at the heart of the community's recovery from the pandemic.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today visited the Rex Theatre in Charlton to announce a \$800,000 grant from the Labor Government's *Regional Cultural Infrastructure Fund* to upgrade the much-loved local landmark.

Built in 1938 and community-owned since 2007, this art deco theatre in Charlton's High Street is a working cinema museum that still uses its original fixtures and fittings to operate. It's staffed solely by passionate, local community volunteers.

The renovation works are set to begin this month and when complete it will mean the site can host many theatre productions for the Buloke Shire and broader Victorian community.

It will attract more visitors to the small town of Charlton and help the theatre achieve its full potential as an artistic, creative and community space.

The rear of the building is being extended to add new dressing rooms, toilets and backstage storage for sets and road cases. Currently there are no backstage spaces, limiting the live performances that the Rex can host. This project will allow a range of creative events and activities to be staged at the theatre.

There will be more flexible sound and lighting options for performances and a rehearsal space for local artists that will also act as a community meeting place. The renovated stage and toilets will improve accessibility for audience members and performers.

The Charlton Neighbourhood House will keep operating at the front of the theatre during the construction phase and also once the renovation is complete in 2022.

The restoration will create 10 jobs during construction and community events will be held at the Buloke Shire Hall and Charlton Park while the theatre is closed for renovation. This project is part of the Labor Government's record investment of almost \$30 billion in rural and regional Victoria since 2015.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"The renovation will set this popular community theatre up for many more years of wonderful performances and memorable celebrations."

"We know that our arts sector has been hit hard by the pandemic and this will allow it to bounce back in the north west and encourage more visitors to come to Charlton."

Quote attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Danny Pearson

"Upgrading the Rex Theatre will allow a greater diversity of live entertainment in the north west, helping performers, theatre companies and the community grow and get stronger."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Jaala Pulford

"The Rex is known far and wide and is a fantastic calling card for Charlton. This is a true community asset that post-upgrade will even better serve local people while bringing more visitors to this stunning corner of the state."

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