

Tuesday, 19 August 2025

HUGE MILESTONE FOR ARTS PRECINCT TRANSFORMATION

Work to upgrade and expand Arts Centre Melbourne's iconic Theatres Building has reached a major milestone, as part of Allan Labor Government's city-shaping Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation.

Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks today inspected the site, which extends the basement of the Theatres Building to make way for new and expanded facilities, increasing the centre's capacity to host world-class performances.

Enough to fill six Olympic swimming pools, the excavation behind the Theatres Building has resulted in the removal of 15,644m³ of earth and reached the required depth of approximately 14 metres underground.

This will create space for a brand-new flexible rehearsal space and studio, with an adjoining function room, which will support the successful staging of performances and provide new amenities for creative workers and performers.

The expanded loading dock – twice the size of the current dock – will include two new scenery truck lifts, allowing faster and safer bump-in-and-out times for productions, which will mean the centre can add even more performances to its already busy calendar of shows.

This extension increases the space of the Theatres Building by around 16%. Upgrades inside the State Theatre will result in improved accessibility, acoustics, theatre technology and comfort.

There will be a new accessible stage door, more wheelchair positions and two new lifts, meaning for the first time, patrons with mobility requirements can choose to sit across all three seating levels and ticketing reserves in the State Theatre.

Works are also progressing for the next section of the deck to be built for the 18,000sqm garden – Laak Boorndap. A key section of the deck for the garden is currently being installed near City Road.

Laak Boorndap will be an elevated garden planted on a deck more than eight metres high, and it will connect the creative attractions in the precinct like never before.

Around 100 apprentices, trainees and cadets have worked across the Arts Centre Melbourne project to date, gaining valuable experience to kick start their careers in trade.

In total, the wider Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation is expected to create 11,000 jobs over the life of the build.

The Arts Centre Melbourne Theatre Building expansion is part of the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation project, a \$1.7 billion project backed by the Labor Government.

The State Theatre is expected to reopen in early 2027, in time for the Australian Ballet and Opera Australia performance seasons.

For more information about the Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation visit artsprecinct.melbourne

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks

"Melbourne's State Theatre holds a special place in Victorian's hearts. The upgrades will allow this 40-year-old icon to serve Victorians for many years to come, in the heart of our transformed arts precinct."

"This major infrastructure project will further cement our reputation as Australia's cultural capital, while offering exciting career pathways and opportunities for Victorians – and a rare chance to shape the future of a Melbourne icon."

Quote attributable to Minister for Development Victoria and Precincts Harriet Shing

"Every milestone in this transformative project brings us closer to delivering a world-class precinct that reflects Melbourne's identity as Australia's arts and culture capital. It's also a huge opportunity for more people to their careers in building this once in a lifetime project."

Quote attributable to Member for Albert Park Nina Taylor

"This exciting milestone marks a new chapter for Arts Centre Melbourne. The upgrades will enhance the experience for performers and audiences alike, while strengthening the cultural heart of our city. It's a proud moment for our local community to see this iconic precinct evolve for future generations."

Quote attributable to Karen Quinlan AM, CEO Arts Centre Melbourne

"These works will benefit every future production staged in the Theatres Building in every venue. Crews will be able to bring sets, costumes and equipment into the building more safely and efficiently, and performers will have a new rehearsal space right next to the State Theatre stage for the first time."

Quote attributable to Civil construction trainee, Connie Tropea, working on the excavation

"After more than 20 years in hairdressing, I knew I wanted a change. It's been one of the best decisions I've ever made. Every day on site is a new challenge, and I love that I'm constantly learning and improving. I wouldn't trade it for anything."