



PREMIER; MINISTER FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS

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Arts package to 'Ignite' Western Australian arts and culture

Western Australia's cultural life is about to be transformed with the biggest single State Government arts funding injection in the State's history.

Premier Alan Carpenter today unveiled a dynamic \$73million package of initiatives designed to transform dance, theatre, music and visual arts, as well as change the shape of WA's cultural landscape.

Mr Carpenter said the multi-million dollar package would see WA provide some of the richest art awards in the nation, and position the State as the third largest independent film and television production centre in the country.

"WA is an economic powerhouse which now gives us a golden opportunity to build on our State's cultural lifestyle," he said.

"Our vision is for a State that respects and embraces the arts and one that enriches the WA community."

The Premier said the innovative package would include Australia's richest indigenous art prize, the Premier's literary award - now the richest in the nation, the creation of an acquisition fund for the Art Gallery of WA, a major sculpture project and a new philanthropy incentive program.

He said a major production fund would also be established. It was the first of its kind in Australia and was an extremely significant investment on the Australian cultural map.

There would also be additional funding for upgrades to the Perth Concert Hall, State Library and a new Arts Capital Fund.

Culture and Arts Minister Sheila McHale said the initiatives aimed to make WA an even better place to live by celebrating, showcasing and building on the tremendous depth of artistic talent in the State.

"WA is already blessed with a unique and prosperous lifestyle and this vision has the potential to make our great State even greater," Ms McHale said.

"This significant package will provide fantastic opportunities for the tens of thousands of people in our creative and arts industries in WA.

"The Carpenter Government is protecting our State's unique lifestyle and creating jobs and opportunities for all Western Australians."

The 'Ignite' package includes:

- **Indigenous Art Award** - The richest indigenous art awards program in the nation, more than \$1.1million over four years will celebrate and honour indigenous art and culture. The prestigious annual awards will recognise individual artists, groups of artists and young artists and attract national and international attention.
- **Premier's Australia-Asia Literary Award** - This is a ground-breaking award and the richest of its kind in Australia. With \$1.2million over four years to recognise excellence in literature, the award will be for a book-length work published in the preceding year, written by an author resident in Australia or Asia.
- **Art Gallery of WA** - Up to \$15million for a special Acquisition Fund. \$10million of that will be provided in 2008-09. We are challenging the corporate sector to match the \$10million dollar for dollar. If they do, the State Government will inject a further \$5million. (The current State Government contribution to the gallery's acquisition fund is \$250,000 per year)
- **Arts Facilities** - \$12million over four years for capital spending on WA's most used cultural facility, the State Library, as well as seat upgrades at Perth Concert Hall and a special Arts Capital Fund for facilities at professional arts organisations, clubs and community organisations.
- **Ballet and Symphony** - to benefit from up to \$8million to stage more performances, together with increased recurrent funding through indexation of grants. Opera will in turn be able to stage more performances given its increased access to the symphony.
- **Regional Ignite** - \$5.6million over four years will see a 30 per cent increase to regional grants and touring programs, added support for regional literature festivals and extension of the 'Out there' project to target regional communities.
- **Major Production Fund** - \$5million over four years for a competitive program enabling artists and companies to think big to create exciting new large scale works. This is the first of its kind in Australia.
- **Sculpture Project** - \$1.5million over four years for a prestigious international competition to build two major sculptural works to enrich the Perth cityscape. Architects and artists will be invited to team up to submit concepts for one sculpture to be built in 2009 and one in 2011.
- **Philanthropy Incentive Program** - \$350,000 over three years to encourage individuals, trusts, organisations or foundations to donate to the arts. Also, a special **WA Premier's Arts Partnership Fund** will inject \$150,000 over three years for a new incentive program to encourage business to partner with WA arts organisations.
- **ScreenWest** - \$3.2million for WA's screen production agency to create further sensational product and cement the State's position as one of Australia's biggest independent production centres.

- **Large scale international arts events** - \$3.5million to enable leading international artists to work with WA artists to create large scale public events.

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