




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2020

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Creative Industries

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeester—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (9.59 am): The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the arts and cultural sector globally, including across Queensland. The Palaszczuk government moved early, releasing more than \$20 million worth of relief measures beginning several months ago to help stabilise the sector. Now the Palaszczuk government is continuing to support the sector, with the Premier announcing a further \$22.5 million recovery package this week as an important part of the Palaszczuk government's plan to unite and recover for Queensland jobs.

The arts and cultural sector is responsible for the jobs of more than 90,000 Queenslanders. Many of them were the first hit by social distancing restrictions and will be the last to recover as restrictions ease. The package we have announced includes \$11.3 million to help Queensland's arts organisations and venues offset losses incurred as a consequence of COVID-19. The arts and cultural sector will play an important role in Queensland's wider economic recovery, including through our state's cultural tourism offering. This week's package includes \$4.2 million to support a pipeline of performing arts and live music to support our cultural and tourism recovery.

In recognition of the fact that the sector also plays a vital role in supporting the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders, the government is also investing \$2.9 million in partnerships with local councils, venues, artists and organisations to support employment opportunities for local artists and arts workers and vibrant arts experiences for communities statewide. The package also includes \$4.1 million to support audience access, including for alternative and outdoor venues, digital delivery and online First Nation arts and crafts sales platform and grants for small to medium arts organisations to help fund infrastructure projects.

This package brings the total value of the Palaszczuk government's targeted support for the arts and cultural sector since COVID-19 to more than \$42.5 million. It is important to recognise the resilience of so many people in the sector through these incredibly challenging times. The sector's considered approach to consultation with the government and their discussions with the Premier and me in recent weeks have been constructive, and demonstrates what can be done when we work together.

It is a tradition that a single bulb, a ghost light, is left burning whenever a theatre goes dark. In so many theatres around Queensland right now there are single bulbs burning, providing hope for our storytellers, artists and arts workers who will return when the lights come back on. Our government will stand by the arts and cultural sector as it emerges from the present challenges, and I look forward to seeing it continue to thrive.