

Question on Notice
No. 229
Asked on 10 March 2011

MS MALE asked the Minister for Finance and The Arts (MS NOLAN)—

Will the Minister advise the House how the Bligh Government is bringing world class visual art to Queensland and what is the economic benefit to the state?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government had the foresight to build the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) so that Queenslanders could experience world-class visual art at a world-class facility. Since it opened in 2006, the Gallery has presented a dynamic range of exciting and innovative exhibitions that has delighted audiences.

I can advise that attendance to GoMA continues at record levels. Prior to the redevelopment of the precinct attendance at the Queensland Art Gallery was 450 000 per year. By the 2009–10 financial year attendance at the two Galleries had tripled to 1.4 million per year.

This 200 percent plus increase in attendances is thanks to the Queensland Government's \$277.3 million investment in the Millennium Arts Project to redevelop the Queensland Cultural Centre in 2006.

In addition to attendances, the Gallery's highly successful membership program has resulted in a 400 percent increase in memberships over the same period.

The Gallery has been the exclusive Australian venue for a series of major international touring exhibitions in recent years. These have included *Andy Warhol* (2007), *Picasso & his Collection* (2008), *American Impressionism & Realism: A Landmark Exhibition from the Met* (2009) and *Valentino, Retrospective: Past/Present/Future* (2010). These exhibitions have been immensely popular with locals and tourists alike, with over 50% of the visitors to these exhibitions coming from outside the Brisbane metropolitan area. With the total economic impact of these four exhibitions alone calculated at over \$45 million, the economic benefit to Queensland through tourism has been immense.

I recently announced that GoMA would be the exclusive Australian venue for the major international exhibition *Surrealism: The Poetry of Dreams*, which will open on 11 June 2011. This landmark exhibition has been developed by the Gallery in partnership with the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and will feature 180 surrealist works from the Centre Pompidou's Musée national d'art moderne. The exhibition represents an unprecedented opportunity for Australian audiences to access this unparalleled collection of European surrealist art.

Queensland's success in securing this important exhibition is testament to the Gallery's profile internationally, a profile that has been raised through important contemporary art exhibitions such as the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT) and *21st Century: Art in the First Decade*, which is currently on display at GoMA. *21st Century* has broken records at the Gallery, attracting the highest attendance for a single day since the opening of GoMA, with 13,500 people visiting in one day in December 2010.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that the benefits of these exhibitions are not limited to those Queenslanders living in Brisbane. The Queensland Art Gallery is the only state gallery to provide, as part of its core business, an ongoing and comprehensive program of travelling exhibitions and public programs to regional and remote venues across the state. In conjunction with the *21st Century* exhibition, the 21st Century Kids Summer Festival has been held at 39 regional and remote Queensland venues to date, with a further 11 venues scheduled to participate in the coming months.

I am also very pleased that regional Queensland audiences will soon be given the opportunity to view *In bed* (2005), the incredibly popular sculpture by Australian-born, London-based artist Ron Mueck, when the work commences a regional tour in September 2011. The tour follows the success of the *Ron Mueck* exhibition at GoMA last year, where it attracted over 185 000 visitors. *In bed* will commence its regional tour at the Ipswich Art Gallery on 10 September, and will continue on to Townsville, Cairns and Mackay.

These significant cultural events offer Queenslanders of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to experience world class visual art, wherever they live.