

# Public Art that the Public Wants



Canberra**liberals**

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# Broken Arts.

## The disconnect between the people and the arts under the Stanhope Government

The Canberra Liberals see the arts community as a vital and vibrant contributor to Canberra.

At its best, art can be inspiring, interactive, reflective and communicative. It shapes not only our enjoyment of the present, but can honour our past and inspire our future.

At its heart, art is a way for people from all walks of life and all cultural backgrounds to engage their imaginations and to engage with each other.

Unfortunately, we have also seen the arts become increasingly distant and disconnected from the community at large.

The funding for Canberra Arts Marketing has been drastically reduced.

Well established and nationally recognised institutions, such as the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, struggle for funding each year just to be able to perform.

Most visible, and most indicative of the disconnect between the population and the arts community is the contentious 'Percent for Art' scheme of the Stanhope Labor Government. This program has created such ill-will and resentment in the community that government approach to arts funding is being seriously questioned.

A rethink of art funding is required to reengage the community with the arts, and reinvigorate the arts community.

The Canberra Liberal promise to establish a Canberra Art Biennale is a major innovative idea to build on the strengths of the Canberra art scene. This document outlines the extended vision of the Canberra Liberals on art.

A Canberra Liberal Government will deliver increased funding for our major arts bodies and provide arts for the public that the public wants.

# The Canberra Art Biennale

The national institutions in Canberra house the most impressive collections of artworks in Australia. The National Gallery of Australia, the National Portrait Gallery and the Australian War Memorial are among the greatest drawcards in the Parliamentary Triangle.

Time and again these institutions have shown that major art events can be powerful magnets for interstate tourism. Over the years the National Gallery of Australia has been able to draw very large numbers of interstate visitors to Canberra, to view blockbuster exhibitions of art from overseas museums and galleries. However in recent years there has been emerging concern that overseas institutions are growing more reluctant to lend precious artworks, due to heightened assessment of the risks to artworks during transit to Australia.

Despite the premier position that Canberra enjoys as a home to publicly owned art, our city does not enjoy as strong a reputation as a centre of contemporary commercial art. The cities of Melbourne and Sydney have been most effective at hosting major contemporary art events to attract interstate tourists. For instance the recent 16<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Sydney attracted 435,000 visitors. A number of high income art lovers are prepared to travel interstate to see art – not just to admire it, but also to buy it.

**A Canberra Liberal Government will inaugurate a Canberra Art Biennale that will more than rival the Biennale of Sydney and the Melbourne Art Fair. Unlike the rival events in other states, the Canberra biennale will also involve coordinated art exhibitions involving public institutions throughout Canberra. This provides us with a significant point of marketing differentiation.**

Visitors to Canberra will be able to follow an Art Trail that takes them around displays of contemporary works that are for sale, in addition to visiting public galleries to view works of national significance. The Biennale will provide Canberra's public institutions with an opportunity to cycle works out of storage which have not been seen for some time.

The Canberra Art Biennale will be timed in summer and will be centred around the parliamentary triangle. Our public art institutions are within easy walking distance of each other and we will book venues like Albert Hall, the Hyatt and the Great Hall as locations for the display of leading contemporary art.

The evenings will include film events in the parliamentary triangle. The Canberra Art Biennale will also feature artist talks, lectures by leading art experts and exhibits that incorporate works by some of the best Australian and international artists. The event will directly benefit living artists, help to enhance their reputation and advance their careers.

**A Canberra Liberal Government will provide \$1 million of towards the operating costs of the first Biennale in 2010, to ensure its success.**

We anticipate that some of this investment can be recovered through commission on sales and there will be a broader return to the Canberra economy through increased visitor numbers. Art buyers are often high wealth individuals and this event will improve both the number of tourists and the yield per visitor.

A Canberra Liberal Government will not only support \$1 million of the operating costs for the event, but we will also fund a marketing campaign from the expanded tourism marketing budget to promote this event in external markets and in the arts media. The tourism marketing budget will also be used to help promote some of Canberra's leading arts festivals.

## Liberal Arts.

The Canberra Liberals have listened to the arts community about the problems associated with the various funding models currently available from the ACT Government.

The Canberra Liberals believe that the arts are broader than the public monuments favoured by the Stanhope Government and that there is an important role for dance, film, visual arts, music, literature, the digital arts and other expressive art forms.

A Canberra Liberal Government will provide an additional \$175,000 over the next four years to support a larger base of ArtsACT Project Funding. The program will be flexible and accommodate a range of art forms, but will require a high degree of transparency and accountability.

We will seek to improve support for community-based and not-for-profit art activities that involve strong public participation, for instance the Australian National Eisteddford.

	<b>2008-09</b> <b>\$000</b>	<b>2009-10</b> <b>\$000</b>	<b>2010-11</b> <b>\$000</b>	<b>2011-12</b> <b>\$000</b>
Increased ArtsACT Funding	\$25	\$50	\$50	\$50

# Public Art that the Public Wants.

## A new approach to public arts selection.

The Percent for Art scheme of the Stanhope Government has been one of the most derided arts projects in Territory history.

The scheme has been most criticised for creating the sense of disconnect between the public of Canberra and the monument building favoured by the Stanhope Government. The Stanhope Government has not consulted the public on its choice of artworks for Gungahlin Drive, Yarra Glen and Linear Park. The latest plan is for a \$1 million “iconic” artwork straddling Northbourne Avenue, but the exact selection of artwork is being kept a secret by Stanhope Labor until after the election.

The Canberra Liberals offer a fresh new approach to both the system itself and the selection of the artworks.

Instead of an arbitrary percentage being allocated for artworks which have proven inaccessible and unengaging, the Canberra Liberals will concentrate the funding to support creation of a more limited number of major artworks that engage the community right from the start. A fixed funding figure will replace the arbitrary and oscillating funding provided under the Percent scheme.

Proposals for public artworks will come directly from local artists, and could include, for example, suggestions to create works that honour local people, or commemorate an event, or celebrate a particular part of Canberra’s Heritage.

Proposed artworks will be subject to expert scrutiny to compile a shortlist of suggested art pieces. This short list will then be published, with the power of selection vested in the Canberra public, who can then vote from the shortlist to select the successful work.

This selection process is a new way of approaching public art, to reengage the community and make them feel part of the arts process instead of having it imposed upon them. It will create public art that the public wants.

	<b>2008-09</b> <b>\$000</b>	<b>2009-10</b> <b>\$000</b>	<b>2010-11</b> <b>\$000</b>	<b>2011-12</b> <b>\$000</b>
Public Art Capital Allocation	\$150	\$285	\$294	\$302

# Music to our ears.

## Supporting the Canberra Symphony Orchestra.

The Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO) has been described as one of the “backbones” of Canberra’s cultural scene, supporting a wide range of cultural activity. The CSO is unfortunately severely constrained by the funding it receives. It relies heavily on donations from the private sector and the loss of a single sponsor can cause dramatic problems and strain.

The conductor of the CSO has observed that:

“yes, we could perform more concerts, we could be doing recordings, we could have a chamber series, a baroque series ... at the moment, we are picking out the best ideas that are possible within our budget.”

Australia should have a national symphony orchestra and Canberra, being the national capital, is best placed to be the home of that national orchestra. The Canberra Symphony Orchestra should be developed over time to become that national orchestra.

The Canberra Liberals will provide an increase of around 25% of the CSO’s current funding budget, or an extra \$100,000 per annum. We will also provide new funding of \$30,000 per year to the Canberra Pops Orchestra, which provides popular symphonic entertainment on a scale unlike any other group in Canberra. The Pops Orchestra currently receives no ACT Government funding at all.

A better resourced CSO could participate in more community events, in training of elite musicians, in performance of new works and recordings.

A Canberra Liberal Government will work with the CSO and other relevant organisations and eminent musicians, composers and other people to refocus and develop the orchestra as the Australian National Orchestra. We recognise that there will be much hard work required to work towards National status and recognition, but we are determined to improve base funding and work with the CSO to support ambitious business plans to take them to the next level.

	<b>2008-09</b> <b>\$000</b>	<b>2009-10</b> <b>\$000</b>	<b>2010-11</b> <b>\$000</b>	<b>2011-12</b> <b>\$000</b>
Canberra Symphony Orchestra	\$50	\$100	\$100	\$100
Canberra Pops Orchestra	\$15	\$30	\$30	\$30

# Action on Film

## Supporting Canberra's Film Festival

One of the most active and successful participants in the locals arts community is the film sector.

The Canberra Short Film Festival has grown from success to success, and the Canberra Liberals will commit to continuing the current level of funding and support.

The Short Film Festival is particularly valuable to the local arts scene, because it attracts many younger Canberrans from a variety of backgrounds to actively engage in a range of film formats, from fiction short file formats to music videos.

One area which is constraining the festival is the prize money on offer. Currently prize money is offered by external private companies and the totals are no more than \$2,000 and usually \$1,000 to \$1,500.

A Canberra Liberal Government will provide an extra \$8,000 to create a headline prize for a film shot in Canberra or featuring Canberra, to lift the festival into national prominence. We will continue to support the Festival Organisers in arranging and promoting the event.

The Canberra International Film Festival celebrates feature length films and brings the best of world film to audiences that would otherwise not see them. Currently the festival has no allocation for prizes that would attract the best films in the world. A Canberra Liberal Government will provide \$20,000 to create prizes and support for this important film festival.

	<b>2008-09 \$000</b>	<b>2009-10 \$000</b>	<b>2010-11 \$000</b>	<b>2011-12 \$000</b>
Canberra International Film Festival		\$20	\$20	\$20
Canberra Short Film Festival Prize		\$8	\$8	\$8

# Fringe Benefits

## Taking Canberra's Fringe Festival to the world stage.

Fringe Festivals around the world offer some of the most exciting opportunities for emerging performers and can also become staples for established touring groups and performers to bring the best the world has to offer to various cities.

A key component to Fringe Festivals is the prestige and monetary rewards from being the outstanding performances of the festival. Performance awards are often used as milestones in a performer's career.

Canberra has a strong and growing Fringe Festival included as part of the Multicultural Festival.

As well as our ongoing support for the Multicultural Festival, a Canberra Liberal Government will provide an extra \$30,000 each year as prize money significant enough to attract some top touring performers from around the world and put the Fringe in a world class league.

	<b>2008-09 \$000</b>	<b>2009-1 \$0000</b>	<b>2010-11 \$000</b>	<b>2011-12 \$000</b>
Fringe Festival Additional Prize Money	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30



# Canberra Theatre Centre

The Canberra Theatre Centre is a central part of the performing arts in Canberra.

The Canberra Liberals are aware of the studies currently underway, looking at a major rethink of the Canberra Theatre Centre facilities and the direction of the Centre.

Without being involved in this process, nor seeing the outcome at this stage, the Canberra Liberals support extra development and assistance to this important cultural asset of the city and we will carefully and positively consider supporting the outcome from the feasibility study when it is released.

The last major enhancement to the Canberra Theatre complex was delivered in 1998 by the last Liberal Government, when the 310 seat Playhouse was replaced by a 622 seat Playhouse. Labor has been in government for seven years, but all it has delivered is an upgrade to the Link building, when the new Civic library was built. This project was funded under the last Liberal government and delayed by the Stanhope government.

The Director of ArtsACT has said that Canberra is missing out on 20 to 30 shows per year because the main Canberra Theatre stage is too small, the ceiling is too low, the wings lack space and the theatre seats too few people to make large shows economic. Mr Stanhope's answer is to say he will welcome an "exploration" of options for a new Canberra Theatre, but he will do nothing unless the Federal Government comes to the party (*Canberra Times* 15/4/2008).

A Canberra Liberal Government will take seriously its responsibility to develop the Canberra Theatre Precinct to meet the growing needs of a major city.

# Funding Summary

The Canberra Liberals have announced a range of new measures to support arts organisations that have proven popular, successful and inspirational.

A set figure has been set aside for public works and a mechanism proposed to involve the public to ensure it is work that the public wants.

As an offset, the unpopular and unsuccessful Percent for Art Scheme will not be continued under the Canberra Liberals.

<b>Recurrent Expenditure</b>	<b>2008-09 \$000</b>	<b>2009-10 \$000</b>	<b>2010-11 \$000</b>	<b>2011-12 \$000</b>
Canberra Symphony Orchestra	\$50	\$100	\$100	\$100
Canberra Pops Orchestra	\$15	\$30	\$30	\$30
ArtsACT Increase	\$25	\$50	\$50	\$50
Fringe Festival Prize	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30
Canberra International Film Festival		\$20	\$20	\$20
Canberra Short Film Festival Prize		\$8	\$8	\$8

<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>2008-09 \$000</b>	<b>2009-10 \$000</b>	<b>2010-11 \$000</b>	<b>2011-12 \$000</b>
Public Art	\$150	\$285	\$294	\$302

<b>Capital Offsets</b>	<b>2008-09 \$000</b>	<b>2009-10 \$000</b>	<b>2010-11 \$000</b>	<b>2011-12 \$000</b>
Percent for Art 2007 Budget Funding	373	490	171	
Percent for Art 2008 Budget Funding	754	1656	1096	778