



Heritage-listed National Theatre to receive a much-needed Façade-Lift

As we celebrate 50 years in St Kilda, the heritage listed National Theatre, Drama School and Ballet School are receiving much needed capital works to restore the St Kilda landmark to its original glory.

CEO Sarah Hunt acknowledged the historical significance of The National in St Kilda and the not-for-profit organisation's vision for renewal.

"Since 1921, this building has been a mainstay of St Kilda's vibrant arts community from its early days as a cinema to its current status as home to The National Theatre, Drama School and Ballet School," says Hunt.

"Through investment from state and local governments, and the generosity of philanthropists and private donors, we are now able to begin a well-deserved renovation of this much-loved landmark performing arts institution".

Following repair and preservation of the theatre foyer ceilings, and a refresh of the Drama and Ballet Schools' foyer in 2023, The National continues its program of renewal with the Awning Conservation Project, which will enliven the façade while addressing structural integrity and public safety.

The \$833k project has been generously funded by the Victorian Government along with philanthropic donations and the City of Port Phillip. It will continue The National's long term contribution to supporting and improving St Kilda and Victoria's thriving arts scene, while enhancing street appeal and ensuring safety for the public.

Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks expressed his support. "St Kilda's National Theatre is a creative icon that has supported generations of Victorians to get their start in the performing arts. We're proud to back this project, which will enhance the building's façade and ensure that this heritage gem is as vibrant and inspiring on the outside as the performances, events and classes that take place inside."

This once in a century project will prevent the ongoing deterioration of the wider fabric including the paintwork, masonry, and interiors, stop water ingress, and comply with current regulations and standards. The project will replace unsympathetic and inappropriate modern works with suitable material including the fascia cladding, lighting, and pressed metal ceiling to ensure its heritage characteristics are preserved.

Capital works have begun on the Carlisle Street façade and will move to Barkly Street in October, with a project completion date in December.

Meanwhile, inside the building, the mezzanine level women's restrooms will be refreshed in October, including new fixtures and fittings, flooring and paintwork. These works have been made possible through the Rainbow Relief Fund, which continues to seek donations for further restorations of public restrooms and the addition of a gender-neutral bathroom.

Future renovation projects planned for The National include painting the building façade and exterior, completing upgrades of all public restrooms, and the ongoing repair of theatre seats.

The National Awning Conservation Project is made possible owing to investment by generous Donors Diana Gibson AO, Susan Thacore, Creative Victoria, William Angliss (VIC) Charitable Fund, Bertalli Family Fund, Scanlon Foundation, the Bowden Marstan Foundation, and the City of Port Phillip.

Chair of The National's Board, Govind Pillai extended his gratitude to funding partners. "As a Not-for-Profit performing arts and education organisation we strive to support a diversity of communities through the arts by providing an accessible venue and a centre for training emerging artists for generations to come." says Pillai. "The generous investment by state and local governments, private donors, and philanthropic organisations is essential for our ongoing operations as well as the restoration and renewal of this beautiful heritage listed venue. We are eternally grateful to our funding partners for their financial and creative support."



The National, Melbourne is the continuing legacy of Australian performing arts pioneer Gertrude Johnson who established The National Theatre Movement in 1935 to ensure training and performance opportunities for young artists in Australia.

Located in Melbourne's Bayside city of St. Kilda, The National Melbourne is home to the 783-seat National Theatre (est 1974), The National Ballet School (est. 1939) and The National Drama School (est 1936).

In 2023 The National welcomed 130,000 people to enjoy the performing arts – through 195 live performances and 40 weeks of performing arts training.

Media Enquiries
Stefan Treyvaud
marketing@nationaltheatre.org.au
0422 199 354



N THE NATIONAL DRAMA SCHOOL

est. 1936

Head of Drama Dr Jaime Dörner



@thenationaldramaschool



@thenationalmelbourne

N THE NATIONAL BALLET SCHOOL

est. 1939

Artistic Director Damian Smith



@thenationalballetschool



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N THE NATIONAL THEATRE

est. 1974



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