

ARTS AND CULTURE TRUST BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 23 June.

MS J.L. HANNS (Collie–Preston) [12.27 pm]: I rise today to speak in support of the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. In doing so, and to begin, I acknowledge that today is National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day, the theme of which is proud in culture, strong in spirit. I acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues in this and the other house who have Indigenous children and grandchildren. I also pay tribute to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who work with Indigenous children across the state and Australia.

The Arts and Culture Trust Bill is a reform initiative that will improve the governance and broaden the powers of the Perth Theatre Trust Act 1979, which restricts the activities and the venues at which these activities can be performed under arts and cultural pursuits. In casting my mind back to 1979, I am looking around the chamber; hopefully, we were all here in 1979! In 1979, I was seven years old. I note that many members of Parliament, such as the members for Hillarys and Cockburn, were born in 1988. I mention that to frame the context of what I am about to discuss.

The member for Cockburn tells me that when he was born in 1988, as a bicentennial baby, he received a \$50 deposit as a national initiative. I was not so lucky, being born in 1972, but in 1979 I did receive a grey book that commemorated 150 years of the establishment of the Swan River settlement. Obviously, at that time, sadly, the many, many thousands of years of Indigenous ownership and trusteeship of this land was not acknowledged. I remember receiving my commemorative book as a school student. It was a sticker book in which we could put stickers of the black swan and all those things. Unfortunately, my book was destroyed by a rogue bicycle rider in combination with a puddle of mud on my way home, and I cried for days about that particular occurrence.

I talk about this because I want to set the context of arts and culture in 1979 and acknowledge that it was a very different society from today's. I thought I would raise some fun facts about arts and culture in 1979. This was the year that the Art Gallery of Western Australia was built. It is referred to in architectural terms as belonging to the brutalist style of architecture, and we can see other examples of that form of architecture in Perth. In relation to other aspects of arts and culture, *Kramer vs. Kramer* was the highest grossing film of that year, but my personal favourite, as a seven-year-old, was Jim Henson's *The Muppet Movie*. *Simon Townsend's Wonder World* debuted on television and the Australian top 10 in the music charts featured classics like *Up There Cazaly*, *Y.M.C.A.* and *C'mon Aussie C'mon*, and the number one song from that era was *Lay Your Love On Me* by Racey. Thankfully, we have no karaoke in the chamber today, but I think all of those are worthy of mention! In 1979, the Archibald Prize was won by Wes Walters for a portrait of Phillip Adams, OAM, and my favourite band of all time, INXS, was still called The Farriss Brothers. I give these examples today to demonstrate that our approach to arts and culture is very different from what it was in 1979 when the Perth Theatre Trust was established. I think this is a timely review of the legislation and I welcome broadening the scope of arts and culture in line with 2021 and beyond.

The Perth Theatre Trust is very Perth-centric in nature. Three out of the eight members of the theatre trust are City of Perth nominees. The new legislation will mean that arts and culture activities carried out under it can happen anywhere across Western Australia, and that is of particular relevance to me, as a regional member of Parliament. I look around and see many other regional members of Parliament here today and I am sure it makes everybody very happy that, if this legislation is passed, we will certainly be able to diversify what arts and culture means in the regions. I would like to say that regional members from both the government and the opposition should welcome this initiative under the banner of arts and culture.

Under the legislation, the minister will be able to declare any part of the state as a venue. That can be done within either a sunset clause—so, a set period of time—or an enduring clause. I see this as a significant benefit for regional Western Australia and the arts and culture scene and I think the possibilities are endless. I look at and reflect on the areas of visual arts—festivals, concerts, exhibitions, dances, theatre, music, recreation, and education and production activities around arts and culture. I particularly wish to highlight the opportunities that could be undertaken around Indigenous arts and culture if these activities are moved to regional areas under the new legislation.

Scope is available for this to involve both government and private and public partnerships, which means that major arts and cultural events will be able to be brought to the regions with both government support and private investment. Under the new legislation, we will also have the ability to broaden employment powers, which means that in regional Western Australia, arts and cultural activities will be able to create employment activities relating to arts and culture, particularly when the employment opportunities allow for ongoing and casual employment. This means that there will certainly be other opportunities for regional employment around arts and culture, which is often restricted in the regions. The activities that we see in the regions, particularly in my area of Collie–Preston, are often mining based and certainly do not feature arts and culture heavily. The opportunity to bring into the regions employment with an arts and culture focus is certainly going to be welcomed in communities like mine.

If we pass the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021, the minister will be able to declare any part of the state a venue. I do not have a very good imagination. I love art and culture, but I do not have an artistic bone in my body, but I can just imagine something like the West Australian Symphony Orchestra performing by candlelight in some of the gorges in Karijini National Park in association with camping and Indigenous pursuits, whether that be dance, culture or music. I think activities like that that stretch beyond the Perth-centric focus of the Perth Theatre Trust will bring some exciting opportunities for regional arts and culture.

I refer to the member for Albany. I can imagine—again, my imagination is very limited to what I have seen and done—giant puppets, like those that were in Western Australia several years ago, telling the story of the Anzac legend of the *Lighthouse Girl*. *Lighthouse Girl* is the story of a girl who grew up in Albany, so I imagine that the minister would be able to declare Albany a venue that could host giant puppets walking through the streets of Albany and telling the story of the *Lighthouse Girl*. The lighthouse girl was the last human contact for troops departing for Gallipoli in 1914, so there are immense opportunities to weave some of those arts and cultural activities into an understanding of our heritage and history.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's also a great play. Did you see the play at the State Theatre?

Ms J.L. HANNS: No, minister, I did not.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It was very good.

Ms J.L. HANNS: Thank you.

I of course now focus on Collie—Preston and the Wellington Dam wall mural and the associated art trails through Collie. It was a \$1.5 million commitment from the McGowan Labor government. The Premier's definition of "art" in the original concept for this mural was to paint a picture of Hon Mick Murray reclining on the dam wall. Significantly, that concept was rejected—thankfully for all of us!

Mr D.A. Templeman: Thankfully, it wasn't a nude!

Ms J.L. HANNS: No; correct. That is a thought I will put out of my mind for now!

Ms K.E. Giddens: Not a helpful interjection!

Ms J.L. HANNS: No, it was not a helpful interjection!

Mr D.A. Templeman: I'm quite often unhelpful with my interjections!

Ms J.L. HANNS: I think of the opportunities if the minister declared Wellington National Park as a venue under the Arts and Culture Trust Bill, if it is successful. A recent concert that occurred in Perth was performed by the WA Symphony Orchestra in conjunction with Birds of Tokyo. I have a contact in that band because my cousin is one of the guitarists in Birds of Tokyo—hi, Adam Spark; how are you going? The ability to declare that national park as a venue under this bill means that we could have an amazing facility lighting up experiences around the dam mural at night-time under the Southern Cross. There would be some incredible opportunities for my region and other regions around Western Australia.

I ask all the other people in the chamber today to take the time to think about their areas, communities and electorates and what locations might possibly be declared as venues if the Arts and Culture Trust Bill is passed. The opportunities under this legislation are not limited to the examples I have given today, and I challenge members to think about what this could mean for their areas and regions. As I said, despite being an enthusiastic advocate of the arts and culture, I do not have an artistic bone in my body. It is not my strong point, but there are many people who will have better examples of opportunities and can make better suggestions under this new legislation.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You are underselling yourself!

Ms J.L. HANNS: I don't know about that!

I would like to reinforce that opportunities for arts and culture events in the regions will be very much enhanced by members in the chamber supporting this legislation. I commend this bill to the house—I do not know whether I can do that, minister?

Mr D.A. Templeman: Of course, you can.

Ms J.L. HANNS: I commend this bill to the house. I ask all members to support this very important legislation and understand its possible impact on regional Western Australia.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [12.40 pm]: I rise today to also contribute to the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. I have stated in this place before that in my view art is incredibly significant to the fabric of our society and, indeed, our culture. It can enhance our sense of identity, express a complex set of emotions in vastly different and myriad ways and formats, share unique stories, shine a light on really important issues, illuminate audiences, record

our history, foster diversity, honour our heritage and share our pain, provide deep insights, and, ultimately, bring communities together.

The arts sector continues to enrich our lives by way of entertainment, but it can do so much more. The arts and culture sectors employ a significant number of Western Australians and are important industries for the local economy in not only the metropolitan area but also the regions. It is important to be able to share our own very Western Australian stories in creative ways and across a variety of mediums, especially in an era of hyper-globalisation. Art acts to both nourish and preserve our culture. Thankfully, the McGowan government recognises the valuable role that the arts plays in our community. I wish, however, to especially acknowledge the commitment of the Minister for Culture and the Arts for always looking at every way of supporting and driving the success of this sector right across our state in both the present term and the previous term. I extend big congratulations to him for his continued efforts in this field.

It was unfortunate, of course, that this bill did not pass during the last parliamentary sitting or the last term, but that has provided us with an opportunity to include a further set of clauses that will indeed revolutionise the creative arts in this state. I refer, of course, to the establishment of a screen production facility in WA. This legislative change will allow us to deliver one of our key 2021 election commitments—that is, putting \$100 million towards the creation of a state-of-the-art film studio in Fremantle. As possibly one of the only members of this place who has a diploma in screenwriting, I am most excited at the prospect of eventually being able to use this skill one day.

Mr D.A. Templeman: A Rowe blockbuster!

Ms C.M. ROWE: A Rowe blockbuster, indeed; but perhaps not.

On a serious note, the arts and culture is an absolute passion of mine. I am very keen that we protect our local arts sectors so that it can thrive not only during the pandemic but absolutely beyond and in perpetuity. I was previously a board member and chair of a not-for-profit organisation in this area—that is, the Film and Television Institute WA—for over 10 years. That experience has given me great insight into the critical need for governments on all levels to provide support for these industries, because without critical support, these industries cannot continue to thrive, improve and enhance our lives.

This huge infrastructure project will provide local artists with a world-class facility right here on our doorstep and I believe it will catapult our film industry to a whole new level. It will also attract artistic projects from overseas and provide a huge number of employment opportunities for local artists and crew. From the screen industry's point of view, it will really put us on the map. Furthermore, it will considerably boost local tourism. We will be able to showcase our local scenery right across the state. Crucially, this project signals to the arts industry and the broader community as a whole that the McGowan government genuinely values the arts sector. By investing in this landmark project, our government will be allowing artists to pursue their dreams and create local content for not only domestic audiences but also international audiences to consume and enjoy for years to come.

Our commitment to the arts is not limited to this groundbreaking project though. The McGowan government has consistently provided support for the industry when it has needed it the most over the last four years and especially throughout the pandemic. We have committed \$159 million to the Lotterywest COVID-19 relief fund in response to the hardships being experienced by the Western Australian community as a result of the pandemic and lockdowns. In addition, we have supported the sector by allocating \$2.4 million to the Arts U-15k grant program and the contemporary music fund grant program. Our government has also provided a \$1.5 million support package to Western Australian visual artists. As part of the government's recovery plan, a \$76 million recovery package was announced in August last year to support culture and the arts in WA. As part of that program, \$30 million has been allocated to the redevelopment of the Perth Concert Hall and \$15 million provided for upgrades to His Majesty's Theatre. I also remind members about the projects that have received funding as part of further arts recovery packages, including more than \$5.5 million towards venue hire waivers for local performing arts companies; \$9 million to underwrite COVID-19-associated financial risks for live music and performance; a \$5 million investment in Lotterywest for the Creative Communities COVID-19 Recovery Program: Artist-in-Residence Program; \$2 million to begin planning a new Aboriginal cultural centre; a \$2 million investment in the design and delivery of online portals for Aboriginal art sales and to present performance arts activities; and a \$350 000 contribution to events that are delivered by West Australian Music Industry Association members.

This funding has been critical for the sector, especially in the last 18 months during the pandemic. COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on many industries right across the state, and the arts, given its reliance, of course, on live audiences and performances, has been especially vulnerable to major disruptions caused by the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns that have needed to be implemented. At a time when in-person events and crowds have not necessarily always been possible in many other parts of the world, we in WA have been able to experience festivals, concerts and performances right across the arts sector. I really think it is important to note that it is thanks to good governance by our state government that we have been able to protect not only the arts sectors but also many industries right across our state from being impacted by the pandemic.

One such event that I would like to give a special shout-out to is that of a good friend of mine, Michael McCall. He recently directed a production of the New York Broadway and West End of London hit *The Addams Family* at the Regal Theatre. It sounds as though quite a few members have been to see that. I would like to give Mike a shout-out. He has been involved in the arts industry for a long time and it was very well received. It was also very heartwarming to see a number of—in fact, I think they were all—local artists, many of them from our very own Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts here in WA, which is just fantastic.

To date, we have been able to manage the pandemic effectively. That has meant we have been able to provide a safe environment in which to produce film content in our state. Also, as touted by celebrities and artists in the film industry, Western Australia has a similar climate to that of California. Those comparisons about our climate and WA's suitability for film studios that have been touted for many years means that it is absolutely high time to have our very own state-of-the-art project unveiled.

We are also providing an additional \$20 million for a screen production attraction fund to help attract large film projects to WA. This funding is in addition to some of the other incentive programs offered by the state government and the federal government to attract big productions. It is an added incentive to come west. Not only are we a safe environment, but there will also be a financial incentive.

The new screen production facility will diversify our economy 100 per cent. It will potentially create thousands of jobs, not only in the film industry, but also in hospitality venues near the centre in Fremantle. Without a doubt, it will take our screen industry to a whole new level. It is really exciting. We have never seen anything like this in our state. I cannot wait to see what it will look like. I believe that the new film studio will radically transform and enhance our artistic capacity in WA and allow the industry to expand dramatically. It makes me really proud to see our government, particularly the minister, fostering the arts sector wholeheartedly. As Pablo Picasso said, "Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." I 100 per cent commend this bill to the house.

MRS J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI (Kingsley — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.51 pm]: The member for Belmont wrapped up rather quickly. I rise for the second time to speak on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. I was very passionate when I spoke on it the last time it came to this house. As those members who were away with me last week can attest, I enjoy singing, though whether I am good at it is still out for comment! As a former singer, thespian and screen actor, I applaud the Minister for Culture and the Arts for introducing the bill to the house again. The McGowan government has a vision for a trust that can manage not only theatres, but also other cultural assets entrusted into its care. In its current form, the Perth Theatre Trust cannot achieve this to the fullest extent.

There are so many opportunities here in Perth. I have been listening to other members, whether they be metropolitan or regional members, talking about the opportunities available and the enormous pride that all our communities show in their arts and culture. This type of legislation is really great for embracing arts and culture in Western Australia, but also on an economic level, it can help us diversify our economic offerings. As most people will know and acknowledge, arts and culture drives activation and patronage. If we go to the theatre, the movies or a musical performance, quite often we team that, as I have, with a "date night"—one of the few that we get—by going out to dinner or ice-cream or coffee before or after the event. This drives economic activity towards our small businesses such as restaurants, bars and cafes. Indirectly, it also drives activity towards our tourism operators, such as clothing and gift shops in regional areas.

Culture and the arts is about so much more than the theatre. This bill repeals the Perth Theatre Trust Act 1979. We understand that entertainment encompasses more than just theatre nowadays: we have outdoor theatres, flash mobs, screen, television and, increasingly, virtual reality, which we are well positioned to explore and promote in Western Australia.

There has been lots of interest in creating television and film productions in Western Australia. We have so many synergies and great locations. We have some of the rarest and most unique locations in the world, from the Bungle Bungle Range in the Kimberley down to Cervantes with its beautiful outback scenes right next to the beach, and forests and beaches in the south west. Obviously, our weather is a great asset for all types of art in Western Australia. We have the capacity to undertake a lot of outdoor art and culture activities.

I think I mentioned in my previous speech that I travelled to Japan a few years ago—more than a few years ago now because nobody has travelled anywhere recently. After that visit, a student stayed with us. We took her to a number of different venues, including the only drive-in cinema left in the metropolitan area in my electorate of Kingsley to watch *The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part*. We also took her to Opera in the Quarry and another arts and culture activity held outside. As we were leaving the Quarry Amphitheatre, she asked, "Do you do everything outside?" I said, "Well, yes, because we can." We have the weather and the locations to do that.

Of course, there are obvious synergies with having the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in Western Australia. We are so lucky and fortunate to have WAAPA here. The quality and level of talent that comes out of that place is amazing. We definitely should be capitalising on that. That does not just sit in theatre.

We have musical theatre, as the minister well knows. He attempted to audition there recently. I am not sure whether he was successful.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I haven't had a call back yet.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: It can take a bit of time.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They're still assessing.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: It is seeing what characters the minister is suitable for. WAAPA provides very strong screen and technical courses.

We are in an enviable position: we have the makings of a fantastic screen industry. I wanted to talk about that next. As the minister knows, because I harass him regularly about it, I have very strong contacts in the screen industry in Western Australia. I am very proud of the things that we have done in the screen industry. A very good friend of mine, Roderick MacKay, created a movie called *The Furnace* that was launched last year. It was the only Australian film to be accepted in the Venice International Film Festival in 2020. It was filmed around the beautiful gorges and areas surrounding Mt Magnet and Kalbarri. I remember chatting to him on the night that it premiered at The Backlot, a private theatre in West Perth. He commented that they booked out five weeks' worth of accommodation in Mt Magnet during filming of *The Furnace*. That would never normally happen in Mt Magnet. People could not get a bed in Mt Magnet during filming because every room had been booked. This is a great demonstration of how arts and culture can drive economic activity, not just in the Perth metropolitan area, but also in the entire state of Western Australia. Our capacity to harness this talent and use it to create another industry or to encourage the creation of a bigger industry than we already have in Western Australia is an integral part of this legislation.

It would be safe to say that I was very happy when the minister announced that the government would build a \$100 million film studio in Fremantle. That type of critical infrastructure is needed to ensure that we can bring productions here and have a long pipeline of work for Western Australia. What made me even happier was that it was coupled with \$20 million of production attraction funding. This is really important. We have great crew members and actors in Western Australia. We need to make sure that they can stay here—that they have enough work here so they do not have to go east or overseas to ensure that they have money coming in. This is a really important part of the matrix of how we ensure that our screen industry continues to grow. It is already there; we just need to encourage it so it can continue to grow.

When the announcement was made to build the studio and provide investment funding, Screenwest received some great responses. Its original press release states —

... screen investment in Western Australia hit over \$51 million, doubling the size of the Western Australian Screen Industry over the past three years, with a strong flow of production originating in and coming into the state.

...

The development projects approximately 2800 film production and precinct hospitality jobs to be supported each year in the longer term through the studio.

This is not just about creating a studio where television and film can be made; it is about becoming an economic driver in not only Fremantle, but also the larger part of the Perth metropolitan area.

I was also very lucky recently to have attended the 100th episode celebrations of one of my husband's favourite TV shows, *Outback Truckers*, produced by local company Prospero Productions. Julia Redwood is a friend of mine who invited me to attend the celebration. What I particularly loved about the celebration was that it highlighted in a video package on the night that this was not just about producing 100 episodes. Anyone who has worked in film and TV knows that getting any show to 100 episodes is a massive milestone, but getting a factual show, a non-drama-centred show, to 100 episodes is magnificent. However, the celebration was not just about producing the 100th episode of *Outback Truckers*. It also highlighted how many jobs and how much economic activity was created. At the event, Julia described that it took four years and numerous rejections for Prospero to get the series going in the first place. It has now run for nine seasons and has been seen by millions of viewers in over 120 countries around the world. This is a production from a little production company in little old Perth being seen in 120 countries around the world. The event highlighted that *Outback Truckers* had supported 450 jobs throughout its life to date, and has provided some rare working continuity for a number of screen professionals in Western Australia. That is a key thing that I appreciate about the film studio that we are building in Fremantle. It is about providing continuity for our screen professionals here in Western Australia. Prospero is one of WA's success stories of the WA screen industry, with factual TV productions such as *Outback Truckers*. As I have said, that is my husband's favourite, but I firmly sit in the camp of *Opal Hunters*. That is definitely my favourite show to watch.

Prospero has also produced films such as *Ningaloo: Australia's Other Great Reef*, *Whale Super Highway* and the very soon to be released *Star Dreaming*. That looks like a phenomenal piece of work. It links the stars to Aboriginal storytelling here in Western Australia. Once that is released, I would highly recommend members see it.

As a quick aside, the film *Ningaloo* demonstrated to me how arts and culture can cultivate more than just economic activity. I took my daughter to see the premiere of *Ningaloo* about three years ago. As members might have guessed, *Ningaloo* is all about Ningaloo Reef and how it is coping with climate change. From that one experience of watching *Ningaloo* a few years ago, my daughter went on a research project with her school to investigate how climate change impacts on oceans. She came out of the blue with it; we did not encourage her to do it. Because she had seen that one film, she went on a six-month research project with the SHINE program at her school and created a whole presentation about Ningaloo and the impact climate change is having on Ningaloo Reef, even down to creating her own experiment by putting a piece of coral into my slow cooker to see what happens when the water is heated.

Getting back to the screen industry, I think it is really important in this context to highlight and promote the contribution that the screen industry makes to the Western Australian economy and the capacity for a growing screen industry to assist with diversifying our economy. Snapshot data from project shooting over the past five financial years, 2015–16 to 2019–20, shows that the Western Australian screen industry has increased in size, with contracted production budgets rising from just over \$48 million in 2015–16 to just over \$89 million in 2018–19. It is already more than \$72.8 million in 2019–20. Over the past five financial years, the value of the Western Australian expenditure leverage for every dollar that Screenwest invested has been more than \$4. Every \$1 of production funding that we spend through Screenwest is a \$4 investment that comes back to us. Obviously, last year was a very hard year for many people in the culture and arts industry. Although it was heavily impacted by COVID, Screenwest supported productions that were able to deliver the creation of 5 617 FTE jobs. That is not 5 617 jobs; it is 5 617 FTE jobs, including direct and indirect impacts. The screen industry also generated \$383 million in total income. We need to celebrate the success of other WA documentaries such as *Aussie Gold Hunters*, which is screened in over 130 countries and is Discovery Channel Australia's highest rating local show. As I mentioned, the feature film *The Furnace* was shown at the Venice International Film Festival and the feature film *H for Happiness* was shot in Albany. The member for Albany is not here. That film premiered at the 2020 Berlin International Film Festival. Two seasons of ABC's drama *The Heights* were acquired by BBC One in the UK. ABC's children's series *ITCH* has been sold to numerous territories, including the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Finland and the United States. These are all locally made productions and local talents being exported across the world. It is important to invest in our local infrastructure and secure the screen attraction funding because it will provide stability for our local industry so that it will have a pipeline of work moving through.

Recently, our federal colleague Josh Wilson, the member for Fremantle, also spoke in federal Parliament about the screen industry. I would like to put on record that I agree with him that Australia, and particularly Western Australia, has shown itself to be a place where screen productions can safely be made in picturesque locations with talented professionals. He also called for a more balanced producer offset for film and television without cutting into one to meet the needs of the other. I am really glad that the federal government has put off that idea for now. I think other members would agree with me that we should be pushing the local content requirements in Australia to protect our screen industry, particularly for streaming services.

[Member's time extended.]

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: If the last year has taught us anything, it is that we all like our streaming services, whether it is Netflix, Stan or Disney+, which is my kids' favourite.

Mr J.N. Carey: That's good.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: It is good.

Mr J.N. Carey: *Star Wars*.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: The member for Perth likes *The Mandalorian*.

Streaming services have great shows screening on them, but we need to ensure that we also have Australian content so that we are not consuming just overseas content.

My hope is that this new film studio will also help bridge the gap left by the dissolution of the Film and Television Institute. The member for Belmont spoke briefly about that. When I was making student films at university, one of the things we valued was that we could hire equipment from the FTI. Universities do not always have the most up-to-date equipment, but there is a high demand for it. Having the ability to go to something like the FTI and hire equipment, a sound stage or whatever it might be is really important and we need to look at how we can holistically address the needs of the screen industry.

Film studios are a great vehicle for that and this legislation will enable that to happen. It is important that this bill encompasses the whole state. The Perth Theatre Trust has a metro-centric focus, but culture and the arts does not stop at the boundaries of the metropolitan area, and we heard the great contribution from the member for Collie–Preston.

Mr P.J. Rundle: What about Albany?

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: Albany has some events, but technically it is the Perth Theatre Trust and having members of the trust come from the Perth council is not right. The trust needs a whole-of-state focus and should not be so metro-centric in its offerings. Culture and the arts can be the backbone of regional communities and that should be encompassed by this legislation. I commend the minister for the bill's whole-of-state focus instead of a Perth focus.

In my contribution to debate on the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020, I highlighted the links between arts and culture and tourism, particularly the links between Aboriginal experiences and arts and culture and tourism. This has been quoted many times in this house, but 80 per cent of people who come to Western Australia want to have an Aboriginal culture experience, but only 27 per cent leave having achieved that. My hope is that this legislation will enable growth in the industry of Aboriginal cultural tourism and heritage. This is really important for not only adults, but also our children as they grow up. I was born, bred and schooled in Western Australia and I was not taught half the things that my children are now taught in school about our actual history—the history of both sides. It is great that schools are teaching that now, but we need to complement that by offering Aboriginal tourism experiences in this state.

I also mentioned that this bill will create an opportunity for creative, out-of-the-box thinking. We could do so much in Western Australia. When we could travel, we would go to Singapore to attend the multimedia live-action light, water and fire projection display at Sentosa. At the moment, it is called *Wings of Time*, but then it was a different story and had another name. We have an opportunity to weave our cultural stories into arts and culture to create a unique tourism opportunity in Western Australia using all the things that Western Australians are good at—multimedia and live-action performances. Enabling legislation such as this is helpful to provide opportunities and allow for that out-of-the-box thinking.

Most members know that the love of culture and the arts starts at a very young age and we have a high demand from schools to introduce arts in its many forms—dance, music and theatre. The desire for performing arts spaces is at an all-time high. My electorate has been very lucky to secure an election promise of \$5 million for Warwick Senior High School to build a new performing arts space. Greenwood College will get a massive \$17 million revamp and upgrade of a number of spaces. The primary driver for that upgrade was to build a gymnasium. It is a specialist volleyball school and they could not spike their volleyballs—they kept getting stuck in the roof! The funding has been critical in building a new gymnasium and upgrading and adapting the existing gymnasium into a new performing arts centre. Before the last election, I was proud to stand there and announce that it would get a \$17 million upgrade across the school, but predominantly around the new gymnasium and performing arts centre. Woodvale Secondary College, in the north of my electorate, is currently campaigning for an upgrade to its old gymnasium into a performing arts centre. This will be essential for Woodvale Secondary College because it is a specialist music school. I attended a couple of music performances there when they had to hire seating to fit the people who wanted to watch the performances. It is essential that Woodvale has a performing arts centre with seating capacity for its specialist music program. I commend Woodvale for its campaign and wholeheartedly support it. I will definitely be working with the school to see that come to fruition.

I commend this bill to the house. The 2020 bill was great, but it is even better now with the addition of the capacity to build a film studio. This is something close to my heart. I know that the member for Fremantle will love having the film studio in her electorate.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: The minister will be in the background playing a walk-on part!

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: Yes, she will be with Doug. Doug will be a feature!

The capacity to deliver this is important for not only the Fremantle area, but also the screen industry as a whole. I commend the bill to the house.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [1.15 pm]: I begin by stating that my colleague the member for Kingsley is a tough act to follow. Although I share her passion for singing, I share none of her talent!

I rise to add my contribution to the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 or, as I like to call it, the “Highway to Hell Bill”. I refer, of course, to the phenomenally successful and historically significant cultural event that famously closed 10 kilometres of Canning Highway, beginning at Canning Bridge in my colleague the member for Bateman's electorate and heading west through my electorate of Bicton, concluding in my colleague the member for Fremantle's electorate. In my opinion, it was a living, breathing, heaving illustration of what the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 can enable more of once passed in this and the other place, and, of course, in a post-COVID world.

As the world was holding its breath with the advance of the coronavirus pandemic, on 1 March 2020, the tens of thousands who attended *Highway to Hell* were holding up the sign of the horns in a salute to Fremantle-raised rock

icon Bon Scott, the original lead singer of AC/DC. It was 40 years to the day on which Bon's ashes were laid to rest in Fremantle Cemetery. I will say more on *Highway to Hell* later.

The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 is a reform initiative to improve the governance of the state's arts and cultural assets. The Arts and Culture Trust will be a contemporary statutory authority and have broader powers than the Perth Theatre Trust, which is limited to managing performing arts theatres. I refer to a little of the history of the Perth Theatre Trust. Many of the state's most iconic theatres, such as His Majesty's Theatre, are managed by the PTT, which has served this role in accordance with the powers granted to it under the Perth Theatre Trust Act 1979.

I refer to the history of the bill before us now. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 passed the Legislative Assembly on 15 September 2020 and was read into the Legislative Council on 16 September 2020. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 lapsed when Parliament was prorogued in December last year. Following on from the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2020 being drafted and introduced into the fortieth Parliament, a market-led proposal for a screen production facility was initiated. This proposal has been referred to by earlier speakers but it is worth highlighting further here. It was part of the McGowan government's market-led proposal program, which allows government to provide focused opportunities for industry to respond with innovative solutions that stimulate the economy and create jobs for Western Australians.

The proposal for a state-of-the-art film studio was born from this program, which called for proponents to build, locate and operate a screen production facility in Western Australia. This facility would provide studio, digital and post-production activities to complement the boom in location-based screen activities across regional Western Australia. The proposed facility would also need to meet the requirements of the emerging games and immersive technology sectors.

In February 2021, the McGowan Labor government committed \$100 million, if re-elected, to build a state-of-the-art film studio and screen production facility at Victoria Quay in the electorate of my colleague the member for Fremantle, which also happens to be alongside the electorate of Bicton, ensuring that we will also benefit greatly from this opportunity, as will all those right across Western Australia. The facility is the critical piece of infrastructure needed to take WA's film industry to the next level, with potentially 2 800 new ongoing jobs to be created in film production and hospitality. It will contain a number of purpose-built, highly sound resistant stages and other onsite facilities such as offices, construction space, parking, set storage and other amenities. It is envisaged that the facility will take the local screen industry to the next level, creating jobs for locals in the industry and affiliated areas, such as mine, the electorate of Bicton. It will also support the immersive technology and video games industries.

The proposal to develop the studio was part of the McGowan government's problem and opportunity statements initiative of last year, which brings the government and private sector together to stimulate the economy and create jobs in WA. That is something I am particularly passionate about. Individuals within certain parts of the electorate of Bicton derive their primary income from small business—up to and beyond 40 per cent of those local communities. It is an incredibly important and significant part of the electorate. The construction of the Fremantle-based film facility will create more than 580 jobs, with approximately 2 800 film production and precinct hospitality jobs supported per year for the longer term.

Back to the bill before us now. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 was subsequently amended to give effect to advice from the State Solicitor's Office concerning the proposal that the state will require legislative authority to establish, own and operate the screen production facility business. The Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021 was then introduced to this Parliament on 23 June 2021.

The Perth Theatre Trust has done what it was intended to do over many years but it is time for reform to enable it to take on an expanded role in the management of state cultural assets and embrace the McGowan government's vision of a PTT, which manages not only theatres, but also cultural centres and more under a framework that modernises and transforms it into a new and modern trust. Some of the most important reforms include the trust having powers to manage all kinds of arts and cultural venues, including outdoor spaces such as the Perth Cultural Centre and, of course, the example of *Highway to Hell*. It will include state-owned assets assigned to the trust and potentially any privately owned assets that enter into partnership with it. It will benefit the cultural institutions such as the WA Museum, Art Gallery of WA and State Library, as the buildings in which they care for and provide access to the collections will be linked to a purpose-designed, contemporary statutory authority with a focus on arts and cultural assets. It will streamline governance and provide a strategic focus on the management and maintenance of the assets. The trust will have increased power to participate in commercial activities and business arrangements with the private sector, enabling the trust to optimise the business potential of the assets it controls. The trust will also have a greater power to engage in business arrangements, subject to the Treasurer's approval, again ensuring that there is great sustainability in the future, which is very much a feature of the McGowan Labor government. The trust can operate under different trading names and will have broader employment powers. It will allow the government to declare a state-funded arts organisation to be a resident company. To enable the trust to hold short-term events or opportunities that can arise within the cultural and artistic sector, the minister will have power

to declare any part of the state a venue, with the agreement of all parties, if it is intended to be used partially or wholly as a place for cultural and artistic purposes, and for any duration of time that the minister thinks is appropriate. Board members will be required by law to possess skills and experience that directly relate to the trust's operations.

These reforms will provide opportunity for artists, performers and, importantly, those employed within the sector. The bill strikes the right balance between opportunity and protection of state cultural assets by allowing operational regulations regarding trust property such as management of venues, admission of people to trust property, the behaviour of people who visit trust venues, consumption of alcohol at trust venues, the imposition of fees by the trust and parking management on trust land. The reforms are also good for business and support the creation of greater diversity in our local economy, and the Arts and Culture Trust will be wonderful for our community, bringing culture, colour, music, movement and the creative arts into the lives of more Western Australians than ever before, enriching them in many ways. My colleague the member for Kingsley talked about activation earlier, and for me that absolutely means activation in our community spaces. The experience of *Highway to Hell* taught us how many people in our communities participate when we bring an event such as that to them.

I will conclude by heading back to *Highway to Hell*. I refer to an article published by the ABC on 1 March 2020, which states —

No stop signs or speed limit—nobody was going to slow down Perth as more than 150,000 people turned out to pay tribute to a legendary Australian rock band.

Forty years to the day since Bon Scott's ashes were laid to rest in Fremantle Cemetery, one of the state's major highways became a 'Highway to Hell' as fans lined the route to hear bands riding on trucks perform cover versions of AC/DC classics.

Eight bands turned the highway into a 10-kilometre concert stage, performing non-stop on the trucks and stopping at intervals to play entire songs for larger crowds.

...

"Let there be rock!" proclaimed WA Premier Mark McGowan as he officially opened the event by ringing a 'hell's bell'.

World records were broken, and I refer, of course, to the biggest gathering of air guitarists. The successful record attempt was led by Australian air guitar champion Alex Roberts, aka "Jinja Assassin", with more than 3 500 people pointing their hands to the sky and strumming to a recording of *Highway to Hell*.

Businesses and service and sporting clubs along the route prospered. Hotels that had once hosted Bon and the band back in the day, like the Raffles Hotel in Applecross and my local in Bicton, the Leopold Hotel—a favourite watering hole of Bon Scott's—were swamped with trade. The Palmyra-Bicton RSL sub-branch even ran out of Swan Draught. It was so much fun! My overwhelming feeling from being there was one of great pride and excitement in really seeing the community come together. It certainly left me with that ongoing impression that under a McGowan Labor government Western Australians can pretty much do anything. If we can stop 10 kilometres of highway traffic and bring the community out, I think the sky—or beyond!—is the limit. *Highway to Hell* was our last hurrah before COVID, and how fortunate we were to have it. We are now able to look back on this magnificent event during all the time that has followed. Acting Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to support the Arts and Culture Trust Bill 2021. I congratulate the minister for bringing this bill to this place and I commend it to the house. Rock on!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk): Member, I am thunderstruck!

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr R.R. Whitby (Minister for Emergency Services)**.