

**ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA — JANET HOLMES À COURT — APPOINTMENT**

*Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts)** [2.06 pm]: I would like to inform the house of the recent appointment of Ms Janet Holmes à Court as the new chair of the Art Gallery of Western Australia board. Ms Holmes à Court is one of the state's most influential and respected businesswomen, and has been listed as one of our 100 Living Treasures by the National Trust of Australia. She has been awarded an Order of Australia and promoted to a Companion of the Order of Australia for her involvement and advancement in the areas of construction, wine, cattle, musical and theatre culture, and the visual arts. Ms Holmes à Court has also been awarded the Centenary Medal for arts service as the chair of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and the Black Swan State Theatre Company. She is the former chairperson of WASO, the chairperson of the Australian Children's Television Foundation and deputy chair of the Chamber of Arts and Culture Western Australia. Ms Holmes à Court will be a perfect fit for the Art Gallery's board and I look forward to working with her. As a long-time patron and passionate lover of the arts, she will provide strong and knowledgeable leadership in the lead-up to the gallery's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Ms Holmes à Court replaces outgoing chair Sam Walsh, who leaves to become chair of the Australia Council for the Arts. During Mr Walsh's tenure, the Art Gallery continued to reach and engage with broad audiences, enjoying increased visitation through its well-received *Culture Juice* series of exhibitions, which started with *The Rise of Sneaker Culture* and was followed by the hugely popular *Heath Ledger: A Life in Pictures*. In 2017–18, the gallery focused on attracting new and younger audiences through exhibitions such as the *Culture Juice* series, which attracted over 78 000 visits, 40 per cent of which were new visitors to the gallery. In fact, there was a considerable increase in attendance in the 2017–18 year, with a total of 375 698 people visiting the gallery, compared with 317 932 the previous year—that is an 18 per cent increase.

The major exhibition of 2018, *A Window on Italy—The Corsini Collection: Masterpieces from Florence*, received outstanding support from private philanthropists, the government and the Western Australia Italian community. Private support, including donations, varies year on year; for example, in 2013 and across 2015–16, we had two large cash donations of over \$1 million for the purchase of specific works of art. Last year was different, in that we attracted both \$258 000 to support our successful Corsini collection exhibition, as well as a large and valuable non-cash donation of paintings by Julie Dowling. Importantly, most new donors pledge to pay over a five-year period and these pledged non-cash contributions show up in a different way to cash donations on our balance sheet. I am happy to report that the Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation membership has grown steadily by nine per cent in the past five years. I would like to thank and acknowledge Mr Walsh's contribution to the arts during his tenure and wish him well in his new role.