

PERTH FESTIVAL — 2019 PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [9.04 am]: I would like to inform the house of the recent launch of the 2019 Perth Festival, which promises to provide a significant contribution to our rich cultural and social lives over the summer period and deliver considerable cultural benefits to the Western Australian economy. Perth Festival is Australia's longest-running international arts festival, enriching the lives of Western Australians and visitors since 1953. The festival is renowned for commissioning major new works, celebrating Perth's unique qualities, and building a creative community through arts sector development and diverse audience engagement.

In its sixty-sixth year, and the fourth and final year for its artistic director, Wendy Martin, the festival is set to amaze and entertain crowds with a bold and innovative program. The 2019 program proudly boasts seven commissioned works from local companies under the banner "Made in WA", including works from Black Swan State Theatre Company, Barking Gecko Theatre company, The Last Great Hunt, Ochre Contemporary Dance Company, Cat Hope and West Australian Ballet.

As a key driver of our creative economy, the festival promotes local innovation and cultural exchange with the world to boost skills, attract tourists and provide jobs. The festival brings us the world's best artists and develops and showcases our own world-class talent, reflecting Perth's location in one of the most dynamic regions in the world, in which more than 60 per cent of the world's population lives. Perth Festival is a key attraction for tourists looking for special experiences and is an important cultural tourism attractor for the state.

A highlight of the 2017 Festival, *Boorna Waanginy: The Trees Speak*, is returning, reinterpreted as the 2019 Perth Festival free opening event, supported by Tourism WA. *Boorna Waanginy* will highlight Perth's iconic Kings Park, our Noongar culture and the beauty of our unique environment.

Perth Festival is one of the much-loved and cherished events in the Western Australian cultural calendar, with survey responses from audiences highlighting its important role in our state's cultural life, and delivering high-quality cultural experiences to the people of Western Australia.

Festival audiences continue to grow. The 2018 festival reported more than 450 000 attendances, an increase of 18 per cent from 2017, with new audiences increasing by 12 per cent. This trend is set to continue, with the 2019 program including classical music, theatre, dance, contemporary music, visual arts, Lotterywest Films, and the Perth Festival Writers Week.

The state government has been a principal partner of the festival for 26 years, proudly supporting the festival across a broad range of departments and agencies. The support from the state government and other partners ensures that the Perth Festival continues to build Western Australia's profile as a stimulating place for visitors and residents alike. The principal Perth Festival partner, Lotterywest, has supported Perth Festival since 1990 and has provided more than \$107 million over this period, including a grant of \$7 million for this year's festival.

This important cultural festival delivers significant benefits for Western Australians and visitors, and I would like to wish the Perth Festival a successful 2019 season.

The SPEAKER: Great performance, minister!