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Title:

Notes - The South Australian Government and its Support for the Arts

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NOTES FOR THE PREMIER.

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND ITS SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS.

1. It is only in recent years under two Labor Governments that the arts in South Australia have received the attention and support they deserve.

2. Prior to the 1965 election, under the Playford regime, the main areas of support for performing arts were for the South Australian Symphony Orchestra, the Elizabethan Theatre Trust (along with all other States), the Adelaide Festival of Arts, and several small organisations such as an amateur theatre group, several brass band associations, and the Royal Caledonian Society.

The Art Gallery laboured on with a purchasing grant of \$ 5,000 over and above salaries and running costs.

3. In the 1965-68 Labor Government perhaps the most important development was the commissioning of the 'Degatani Report', by Thomas Degatani of Bolt, Beranek and Newman, the theatre consultants who worked on the Lincoln Centre in New York. The Report recommended a main performing arts complex consisting of a major theatre/concert hall seating up to 2,000 people, an experimental theatre seating about 300, and a drama theatre seating some seven hundred to eight hundred people. The building of this Centre was part of the State Election policy for 1968, an election which the Labor Party won.

4. However, the principle of State Government involvement in the building of performing arts facilities had been accepted and the first part of the Centre, the main theatre/hall was commenced.
5. When the Labor Government came back into power in 1970 we had a major plan for Government support of the arts, and this has now been acted upon.
6. It has meant that at the moment in straight arts grants, in the present financial year, we have spent something of the order of \$280,000. In addition, the grant to the Art Gallery for purchases has been increased on an annual basis from \$5,000 to \$50,000, and all three parts of the performing arts complex have been commenced and will be completed over the next two years at a total development cost of \$10.5M.
7. In the performing arts area, grants have been primarily used to support the Adelaide Festival of Arts, the strengthening of the professional South Australian Theatre Company, and the development of the local modern dance company known as the Australian Dance Theatre. Other grants were given to the Arts Council of Australia, a regional theatre company by the name of Theatre 62, the E.T.T., and for the development of a performing arts centre for young people.
8. This year saw the establishment of a statutory body to take over the South Australian Theatre Company, thus guaranteeing its future financial health and security. A new Board has

8 cont. been selected, and the Company's policies are expected to change over the next five to eight months so that it can start to take its place as one of the pre-eminent repertory theatres of Australia.

The Company's home will be in the new theatre commenced in the Performing Arts complex.

9. That is, basically, the current situation: in the future it is intended to increase State Government support for the arts on these and a number of levels. For instance, we are currently investigating ways in which design craftsmen - quality potters, weavers and so on - can not only be promoted and supported, but also influence industrial design in the State. Plans are being made for a craft centre near the central city, while on the Coorong, some 50 or so miles south of Adelaide, we are planning for an aboriginal cultural centre and resort, which will be the repository of the State's aboriginal artifact collections. The centre will be managed by aboriginals and it is hoped that it will become a 'shrine' for aboriginals in Australia, a place where they can be proud to see their highest art achievements given the regard they properly deserve.
10. Further, officers of my department are currently investigating the possibility of the government providing annual creative fellowships to Adelaide's two universities, and it is hoped that these will provide for Australian composers, writers and fine artists.

11. But in all these plans, the crucial factor is, of course, money - and State Governments already have strained budgets. That is why, through judicious negotiations, most of the areas supported by the State Government are also supported by the Federal Government's Council for the Arts. But at the Commonwealth ministerial level there are some quite strange ideas circulating about the nature of arts grants and the necessity for profitability.....

12. The Federal Labor policy for the arts is for general encouragement and assistance in such a way that maintains absolute freedom of expression for artists. It provides for the encouragement of experimentation, the establishment of a Ministry of Arts, and a far more distinctive, weighty and creative attitude to funding. These are in fact the principles that have motivated the South Australian Government.