

MEDIA RELEASE

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Tasmanian architects awarded design contract for \$75 million world-class arts development

The University of Tasmania has awarded Hobart-based architects Liminal Architecture the role of Principal Consultant for one of the state's most ambitious arts projects – the \$75 million Academy of Creative Industries and Performing Arts (ACIPA).

The Tasmanian firm will partner with internationally-renowned Singaporean architects WOHA and Arup Acoustics and Theatre to design the world-class performing arts and creative industries facility on the site next to the Theatre Royal in Hobart.

UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said the new contemporary landmark development, to be built on Wapping 4, was a key element of the ACIPA project that aspires to promote Hobart and Tasmania as an important international centre for the creative industries.

“The building will be equipped with state-of-the-art acoustic, visualisation and computing technologies as well as flexible laboratories, rehearsal and performance spaces, a Creative Technology studio, recital hall and black-box theatre space,” Professor Rathjen said.

“Importantly, it will also become the new home for the Conservatorium of Music, providing music students with the highest quality recording and performing facilities.

“Co-location with the Theatre Royal, the oldest continuously operating theatre in Australia, will enhance sustainability through sharing performance spaces as well as front and back-of-house elements and technology common to both UTAS and Theatre Royal, demonstrating best practice in adaptive reuse and sustainable development.”

Head of the Tasmanian College of the Arts Professor Marie Sierra said ACIPA was an exciting capacity-building project that would enable UTAS to establish a research and education crucible for the creative industries in Tasmania.

“The Wapping 4 development is a key ‘node’ in the broader ACIPA project, which uses digital connectivity to enlarge the scope and influence of the creative industries in the state, and nationally and internationally,” Professor Sierra said.

“With the nearby UTAS Tasmanian College of the Arts in Hunter Street, the redevelopments on the Domain campus (\$10m), the Melville Street student housing project (\$75.9m) and the Medical Sciences 1(\$60m) and Medical Sciences 2 (\$90m) buildings, and IMAS (\$45m) on the waterfront, the ACIPA development (\$75m) forms a hub of creative, research and social activity in Hobart’s CBD based on a total investment of more than \$350m.”

Professor Rathjen said Liminal Architecture had developed a national reputation for not only its interdisciplinary, community-engaging, place-making designs, but also for the vital role it played in contributing to and elevating Tasmania’s cultural landscape.

“The partnering of local firm Liminal with WOHA, internationally-acclaimed for their cutting-edge work on ecologically specific architecture, and Arup Acoustic and Theatre, will give the project national and global exposure, while strengthening UTAS’ ties to our Asia Pacific neighbours,” he said.

Professor Rathjen said the project would provide creative industries programs and courses, including performing arts, new media, design, events management and digital technologies, using the National Broadband Network (NBN) technology and Australia's Academic and Research Network (AARNet) to broaden delivery and scope across Tasmania.

“The NBN will enable us to link the new ACIPA facility in the Hobart CBD to the North and North West of the state, and Tasmania with the world,” he said.

“Programs that transcend geography and culture will be delivered from around the world using high-tech education facilities, enabling students to access programs locally and internationally.

“We want to see through ACIPA an increase in student participation in tertiary education, particularly in the North and North-West, and we want to address key areas of need in employment and skills.”

The ACIPA project received \$37 million in Commonwealth funding through the competitive Education Investment Fund (EIF) Regional Priorities Round, with the State Government committing a further \$15.2 million towards the development – \$12 million in funding, \$2.3 million in land and \$900,000 towards related archaeological works.

Professor Rathjen said UTAS had been overwhelmed by the support for the project from Launceston, Burnie and Hobart city councils, in addition to that from major performing arts organisations such as the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, MONA and the Festival of Voices.

“The ACIPA project has the potential to generate more than \$660 million in direct and indirect economic benefits over the next seven years and we expect the new development will attract up to 3,000 new students over that period,” he said.

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