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Media Release

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Government grant for Auckland Art Gallery development

Prime Minister and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage Helen Clark announced in Auckland today that the government is contributing \$30 million towards the Auckland Art Gallery development.

Mayor of Auckland city, Hon. John Banks said he was very pleased with the level of government support for this major building project.

“This significant contribution will help to secure Auckland’s place as home to New Zealand’s pre-eminent public art gallery,” says Mr Banks.

“Confirmation of the funding represents another important milestone in the project, and with no more major regulatory and planning hurdles in the way, the project can now proceed.”

The investment, made through the Regional Museums Policy for Capital Construction Projects, recognises the national and international significance of the gallery’s 14,000-work collection.

Chairperson of the Auckland Art Gallery Board, Councillor Noelene Raffills says the government funding is a huge boost for Auckland and most welcome.

“A development of this scale is difficult for a city to achieve on its own. Having government support is vital and its contribution will be appreciated by current and future users of the gallery from across New Zealand and overseas,” says Ms Raffills.

The government funding, spread over several years, represents around a third of the total project cost. Auckland City Council has set aside \$33 million and the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation has committed to raising \$33.4 million, of which \$15.5 million has already been pledged.

Auckland Art Gallery director, Chris Saines said the project team had always believed that its case for government funding was a compelling one.



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“The evident quality, history and representative depth of the gallery’s collection were crucial, given the Regional Museum Policy’s focus on ensuring nationally significant cultural material is housed adequately and made accessible to New Zealanders,” says Mr Saines.

“A modernised and developed gallery enables us to be more innovative and ambitious in the collection displays we can present, with a more diverse range of gallery spaces enabling us to tell a dramatically expanded and enriched story of art in this country.”

The main gallery building closed on Friday, 29 February. Construction on the development is expected to start in late April.

During development, events and exhibitions will continue at the Auckland Art Gallery’s New Gallery, corner of Wellesley and Lorne streets.

The new and improved Auckland Art Gallery is due for completion in 2010.

Ends

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