

Minister for Fair Trading
Minister for the Arts

Virginia Judge MP



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NEW WALSH BAY BUS SERVICES ANNOUNCED AT ARTS FUNDRAISER

NSW Arts Minister Virginia Judge today announced a new bus trial to make commuting to Walsh Bay arts events easier, while opening the Walsh Bay Precinct Partnership's inaugural *Palette on the Pier* arts fundraising dinner.

"I'm delighted to be able to celebrate this inaugural arts fundraising dinner and announce additional support with the trial of a new bus service to improve patronage to the Walsh Bay arts precinct", Ms Judge said.

"From December the NSW Government will run a six month trial by extending the existing 433 bus service on a weekly basis from 6pm to 11:30pm.

"This extension will run from the existing terminus at Millers Point down to Hickson Road with a terminus adjacent to Pier 2/3, Walsh Bay.

Ms Judge said the steep landscape between Hickson Road and Arglye Street Terminus via Windmill Street steps is often quite difficult for the elderly, disabled or mobility impaired to negotiate, especially at night.

"This is great news for the community who now have another cost effective option when commuting to and from arts events", Ms Judge said.

"The 2010 Sydney Writer's Festival alone drew 45,000 visitors and tourists to the area and this January we expect over 15,000 people to descend on Walsh Bay for the Sydney Festival."

Ms Judge welcomed the trial which complements the *Hassle Free Nights* initiatives introduced earlier this year.

"This service will be welcomed by arts patrons who are already enjoying the additional weekend bus services and secure taxi ranks at both The Rocks and the Wharf theatre precinct", Ms Judge said.

"These additions were part of the *Hassle Free Nights* action plan which aimed to improve services to the area and increase patron safety."

Ms Judge urged the City of Sydney to stop delaying improvements to the Walsh Bay area.

She urged the City to install an appropriate way-finding scheme which links the eastern side of The Rocks to Walsh Bay, and remove the midnight parking restrictions along Hickson Road which punishes visitors and tourists alike.

The bus extension announcement was made at the inaugural *Palette on the Pier* arts fundraising dinner at Pier 2/3 which aims to raise funds for Regional Arts NSW.

“Regional Arts NSW has a network of 14 independent Boards which span an incredible 662,000 square kilometres, 1.7 million people and about 1200 local arts and cultural groups,” Ms Judge said.

“The NSW Government is proud to support Regional Arts NSW and has committed to funding in excess of \$1.5 million over 2009-2011.

“This fundraising event demonstrates what can be achieved when businesses, communities and the arts sector work together,” she said.

Artists from regional NSW have generously donated their works for auction.

Ms Judge said the Government is working closely with the arts industry to create more opportunities for regional development and growth.

“The \$200,000 Country Arts Support Program is just one example of the direct support we provide to artistic and cultural initiatives in rural areas around the State,” Ms Judge said.

“We remain committed to the ongoing use of Pier 2/3 as a venue for outstanding arts and cultural events that will generate jobs, attract investment and increase tourism.”

For more information on *Palette on the Pier* visit www.regionalartsnsw.com.au

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