

Media Release

Performing Arts Precinct off to an exciting start

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Confirmation that the Music Centre of Christchurch will soon begin construction of a new \$12.5 million facility in the Performing Arts Precinct is a significant step forward, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee says.

"Positive negotiations are continuing with the Court Theatre and the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, and we hope soon to be able to confirm these organisations will join the Music Centre of Christchurch in the precinct alongside the refurbished Isaac Theatre Royal.

"These great new performing arts facilities will be connected by a public open space and serviced by a new, privately-built car parking building.

"By bringing these groups together we are delivering the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan's vision for the performing arts, catalysing development and recovery of the central city," Mr Brownlee says.

"Areas of public open space between the buildings will themselves be a venue for performance art, as well as a general gathering place.

"This will be a key component to be delivered by the Crown, connecting with other public spaces throughout the city's core."

The Performing Arts Precinct is being jointly led and delivered by the Crown and the Christchurch City Council.

Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel says she believes the performing arts announcement is extremely important for the city's recovery.

"We lost much of the cultural fabric of our city in the earthquake and this announcement sees that not only restored, but also reinvigorated with the different venues coming together in the one place.

"I'm really pleased that we have managed to find a way to resolve the arrangements around the precinct and are now working jointly with the government on this exciting project.

"We remain committed to investing \$30 million as agreed," Ms Dalziel says.

Mr Brownlee says the Crown's contribution to the project is the land purchase process and the design and delivery of the public open space.

Christchurch City Council's contribution under the cost sharing agreement will ensure the precinct is developed in a successful partnership.

"We reduced the area of the Performing Arts Precinct from the CBD Blueprint proposal following the council's decision to repair the town hall; however I'm confident the reduced space will enhance the impact of specialist arts facilities in the CBD.

"All key organisations will be together and that is an extremely complementary arrangement."

The Music Centre of Christchurch is on target to have its construction works underway before the end of the year, while the restored Isaac Theatre Royal is aiming to reopen in November.

