



6 June 2009

## **REES GOVERNMENT BACKS NEW CESSNOCK ART GALLERY**

Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts Virginia Judge and local MP Kerry Hickey today announced the Rees Government's \$5,000 kickstart for the new Cessnock Regional Art Gallery.

"I am delighted that the New South Wales Government's initial contribution will help to establish the Gallery as an attraction the people of Cessnock and the Hunter region can be proud of," Ms Judge said.

Speaking at the launch of the Gallery, Mr Hickey said he was proud to add the NSW Government's support to this community-driven project.

"Cessnock Regional Art Gallery will be a significant tourist drawcard for more than 2.8 million annual visitors who pass through the town every year on the way to the Hunter Valley," Mr Hickey said.

"The Rees Government's contribution, which will cover the children's education program, recognises that providing quality tourist attractions stimulates economic activity, as well as enhancing local participation in the arts."

Ms Judge praised the local community for its pro-active role in fundraising, and its success in attracting significant private support.

"Cessnock and this project are blessed with exceptional energy and depth of community spirit, and the Rees Government is pleased to add its weight to this initiative," Ms Judge said.

"The Gallery gives the people of Cessnock, as well as visitors to the region, access to top quality cultural amenity.

"Galleries, theatres, festivals and artist-run spaces are key drivers of economic value, as well as helping to build strong communities around the state."

"The Rees Government's ongoing commitment to regional arts infrastructure reflects both the strength of the sector and the outstanding potential of arts facilities in rural and regional NSW."

The Cessnock Regional Art Gallery is open from Tuesday – Saturday 9am – 4pm and is located at 16 Vincent Street, Cessnock. For more details, telephone 02 4991 6619.

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