



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 269
14 JUNE 1974

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST SYDNEY
THEATRE**

The Australian Government will provide financial assistance to enable the Nimrod Theatre Company to establish a permanent theatre in Sydney.

The Government has approved a grant of \$123,640 to the company to help pay the cost of its new theatre in Elizabeth Street, Sydney.

The Minister for Tourism and Recreation, Mr Frank Stewart, has approved the grant after receiving advice from the Australian Council for the Arts.

The money has been provided under the Capital Assistance program of the Department of Tourism and Recreation for recreational projects. The Nimrod Theatre Company, a non-profit organisation, was formed about 4 years ago to provide alternative theatrical activities to those provided through established companies.

In 1972 it gained the use, on a 15-year, rent-free basis, of an old salt and tomato sauce factory in Elizabeth Street, Sydney, to replace its small and inadequate premises in Darlinghurst. The company has refurbished the building at a cost of \$204,000. It has raised about \$75,000 towards this by public appeal.

The Government grant will pay the balance owing for the refurbishing.

The grant represents an expansion of the Government's capital assistance program for recreational projects as these have primarily been given in the past for sporting and similar activities.

The Nimrod theatre will provide a valuable recreational facility for people in Sydney, especially those in the inner suburban area.

The grant will encourage a group of enterprising theatre people who can be relied upon to provide valuable community theatre services.

The Nimrod Theatre provides an opportunity for the Department of Tourism and Recreation to give its Capital Assistance Program a wider perspective and to emphasise the importance of all forms of recreation.

The Department of Tourism and Recreation will continue to co-operate with the Australian Council for the Arts in providing cultural facilities for all the Australian people.

The Nimrod Theatre is especially deserving of assistance as it has pursued an adventurous artistic policy, both in relation to established works and experimental theatre.

It has won the respect of the theatrical profession and rapidly growing support from the public.

The Australian Council for the Arts already provides aid for the employment of professional theatrical people for the theatre and for production costs. Its grant this year has increased from \$39,000 to \$75,000.

CANBERRA A.C.T.

(Note to Press Gallery:

The PM and Mrs Whitlam are attending a performance at the Nimrod Theatre tonight. They will be available for photographs with the cast of the current production about 8 p.m.)