



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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MASTERPIECES TO TRAVEL FROM PARIS TO THE NGA

In another major coup for the National Gallery of Australia, works from the famous Musée d'Orsay in Paris will be on show from early December until April next year, Arts Minister Peter Garrett said today.

"There are works by Van Gogh, Gaughin, Cézanne, Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard, and many more.

"The d'Orsay rarely lends works, and it's a tribute to the National Gallery's standing that it has been entrusted with these works while the Post Impressionism display in Paris is closed for renovation."

The Australian Government is providing indemnity for the exhibition under the Art Indemnity Australia program.

"The program has indemnified more than 100 exhibitions so far, and enabled 22 million visitors to see a range of magnificent works of art from around the world," said Mr Garrett.

"This will be the biggest exhibition ever supported in the program's 30 year history."

Mr Garrett made the announcement at an event attended by several major sponsors of the high-profile exhibition and ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope.

"It's an unprecedented opportunity for these sponsoring companies to become associated with the greatest artists in history, and the enthusiasm and confidence they are showing here today is very welcome," he said.

"Based on the figures from previous blockbuster exhibitions, the boost to the local economy should be in the tens of millions of dollars, and I am pleased to see the ACT Government showing its support.

"Putting such a collection into the view of the public is, though, far more than an economic boost. It will help meet Australia's tremendous hunger for cultural experiences.

"And I'm particularly impressed to see a range of public programs being developed, and that 20,000 schoolchildren are expected to attend the exhibition. Building audiences from a young age is vital to maintaining a thriving cultural sector in Australia."

Mr Garrett said that blockbusters at the National Gallery have a knock-on effect to the Gallery's institutional colleagues.

"Within a short walk of the Gallery there are several much-loved collecting and cultural institutions - from the National Library to the new Portrait Gallery and the National Archives - all of which will be delighted to welcome new and repeat visitors from the region, interstate and overseas."

Masterpieces from Paris will be on show in Canberra only at the National Gallery of Australia from 4 December 2009 to 5 April 2010.