

## Claire Spencer AM to take the reins as first ever CEO of London's prestigious Barbican Centre



Photo credit: Mark Gambino

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 9PM AEDST, WEDNESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2021** – Victorian Arts Centre Trust President, Ian Carson AM, has announced the resignation of CEO Claire Spencer AM, who has accepted the role as the first ever CEO at London's prestigious Barbican Centre.

Claire will depart Arts Centre Melbourne after more than seven years, at a time when the organisation recovers from the impacts of COVID-19 and embarks on a decade-long journey of renewal.

"Claire's legacy is in her leadership and extraordinary focus in steering the organisation to financial sustainability, embedding a values-led, people-first culture, setting a strategic commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and in being the unstoppable driving force behind the transformative renewal project, Reimagining Arts Centre Melbourne," Carson said. "Her trademark resilience, tenacity, passion and her commitment to her team, the sector, and the community we serve as Victoria's arts centre is a mark of her outstanding leadership."

During her tenure as CEO, Claire has: embedded the organisational values of Equity, Leadership, Community, Care More and Creativity; delivered the Australian Music Hall of Fame in the ground-breaking Australian Music Vault; spearheaded the creation of the sector-wide mental health initiative, the Arts Wellbeing Collective now comprising 400 partner organisations; completed the \$40m replacement of the State Theatre Flying System during COVID closure; navigated the pandemic response and recovery over a two-year period, including returning live performance to Victoria with Live at the Bowl; and secured government support for the multi-million dollar [Reimagining Arts Centre Melbourne](#).

Outgoing CEO, Claire Spencer AM, said Arts Centre Melbourne is a very special place and it has been both an honour and a privilege to lead it for over seven years.

"When I look back, my mind turns always to the amazing, passionate, wildly creative and talented Arts Centre Melbourne team who supported me throughout my tenure and took many leaps of faith as we followed our ambitious agenda. We have achieved so much together, too much to single out any highlights. I leave a team and an organisation with equity, opportunity, care and community at its heart – realising a vision to be all it can be – a gathering place, where all Victorians feel welcome, and where they belong," Spencer said.

“I came to Melbourne to be embraced by a philanthropic community and a government that cherished the intrinsic value of the performing arts to a thriving Victoria. Words cannot express my gratitude to them, our wonderful Trustees and all our partners, supporters and collaborators. I will never be a stranger to Melbourne – but now it is time to head north for our next adventure”.

Victorian Minister for Creative Industries, Danny Pearson said Claire had made a significant contribution to Victoria's creative sector and cultural life.

“Claire has led Arts Centre Melbourne with great passion and determination, with an unwavering support for artists during times of unprecedented challenge. Her conviction has translated to benefits for many Victorians and the state's creative industry. I wish her every success in her new role.”

Chair of the City of London Corporation's Barbican Centre Board, Tom Sleight, welcomed Claire's appointment as the organisation celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.

“I am delighted that Claire is to head-up the Barbican team as CEO. She brings a brilliant reputation as an arts venue administrator and a track-record in the sector that is second to none. Her leadership on equity, diversity and inclusion issues in previous roles was a significant additional factor in the recruitment panel's clear endorsement.”

Claire will depart Arts Centre Melbourne on 14 April and commence her new role in London in May. A global search for her successor will now commence.

Images can be found [here](#).

For further media information and interviews, please contact Advisor, Media and Communications Kara Bertoncini via [kara.bertoncini@artscentremelbourne.com.au](mailto:kara.bertoncini@artscentremelbourne.com.au).

We're excited to be welcoming visitors back to all of our venues for live experiences in line with the most recent Victorian Government guidelines on COVID-19. We will continue to offer engaging online experiences via our digital hub – [Together With You](#).

For more information including: our current health and safety policies; bookings for free and ticketed events; and other digital content and experiences, please visit [artscentremelbourne.com.au](http://artscentremelbourne.com.au).

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