



Hon Tony Kelly MLC  
Minister for Planning  
Minister for Infrastructure  
Minister for Lands  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council  
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **HISTORIC SARATON THEATRE REOPENED AFTER REFURBISHMENT**

The State heritage listed Saraton Theatre in Grafton has been officially reopened after the NSW Government contributed \$325,000 towards an extensive refurbishment.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, congratulated the building's owner, the Notaras family, and the Grafton community on their tireless efforts to save the building from demolition and restore it to its former grandeur as a public entertainment venue.

"The innovative approach of Angelo Notaras and the extensive use of local tradesmen means the work to rescue this important example of NSW heritage is something the Grafton community can be proud of," the Minister said.

The Spanish-themed Saraton Theatre was built by the Notaras family in 1926 and was badly damaged by three fires during its 84-year history.

In 1999, the building was set to be demolished but was saved through an interim heritage order imposed by the NSW Heritage Council.

A year later in 2000, the site was given the highest level of heritage protection in NSW when it was listed on the State Heritage Register.

The Notaras family has invested a significant sum in the refurbishment, in addition to the NSW Government grants.

Mr Kelly said this project has restored many of the unique heritage features of the building to their former glory, while also introducing modern technology to enhance the experience of audiences.

"For example, a modern surround sound system has been accommodated within the original speaker boxes, and the stage has been extended to accommodate a more diverse range of performances and uses of the theatre," the Minister said.

"In addition to the restoration of the main heritage theatre, two new smaller theatres have been constructed at the rear of the building.

"Two shops have been retained at the front of the building, while the facades of all four original shops have been restored as part of the refurbishment."