

MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

March 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

A new stage above the city: construction begins on Melbourne Recital Centre's visionary new venue

Construction has commenced on The Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon, Melbourne Recital Centre's new performance and events venue, marking a significant milestone in the organisation's evolution and further cementing its key role within Melbourne's cultural landscape. The milestone comes as Melbourne was recently named the world's best city in Time Out's 2026 Global Best Cities ranking, recognising the city's vibrant cultural life.

Positioned at the top of the architecturally-striking building – designed by ARM Architecture – the venue will offer spectacular, uninterrupted views across Melbourne's skyline. This project emerged from a conviction that the building had always held an extraordinary unrealised space within it, and will transform a previously underutilised level into a vibrant, publicly accessible destination.

First announced in 2024 following a \$2 million investment – comprising \$1 million from the Victorian Government and a matched \$1 million philanthropic gift from Ruth and Peter McMullin AM – the development reflects a strong partnership between public and private supporters and aligns with the broader transformation of Melbourne's Arts Precinct.

Melbourne Recital Centre CEO Sandra Willis said the commencement of works represented an important new chapter for the organisation and would convert “a storage space with the best views of Melbourne” into a welcoming, convivial new venue – one that had been hiding in plain sight all along.

“The Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon began as a vision – a belief that this building had another extraordinary space to offer – and to see it now under construction is genuinely thrilling,” she said.

“Where our two existing venues – Elisabeth Murdoch Hall and the Primrose Potter Salon – invite deep listening and contemplative experience, The Beacon is something altogether different – vibrant, electric, intimate. Artists and audiences side by side, above the city, in a space that is as much about joy and connection as it is about music. It's our party space – and it's being made for a city that has always known where to find the best kept secret.

Ms Willis added that, “None of this happens without people who dare to believe in an idea before it exists. I am profoundly grateful to Peter and Ruth McMullin, whose generosity and vision made this possible, and to the Victorian Government, whose investment confirmed

MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

that this is exactly the kind of bold, forward-thinking cultural infrastructure our city deserves”.

“Together, we are creating a new destination within Melbourne’s Arts Precinct – one that I know will surprise and delight everyone who finds their way to it.”

The Beacon will present performances including cabaret, musical theatre, jazz and First Nations storytelling, alongside curated cultural events and community programming. It will also be available to hire for premium private functions, ranging from corporate events to receptions and special celebrations.

Major donors Peter McMullin AM and Ruth McMullin – long-standing supporters of the arts and a range of philanthropic initiatives supporting education and social impact – said supporting cultural institutions was an important part of their broader commitment to community life.

“Throughout our lives, music has been a powerful source of connection and inspiration,” they said.

“As one of the world’s most impressive live music venues, Melbourne Recital Centre plays a vital role in shaping our city’s vibrant musical ecology. We are delighted to support the Centre through this initiative, helping to ensure that the enriching experiences that only live music can bring, continue to grow and reach diverse new audiences.

“Public and private partnerships are essential to sustaining a thriving cultural life. We are delighted to see the Beacon move into construction and are excited by the opportunities it will create for artists, audiences and the wider community.”

Victorian Minister for Creative Industries, the Hon. Colin Brooks MP, said the development reinforced Melbourne’s global reputation as a cultural capital.

“Melbourne Recital Centre is recognised internationally as one of the finest places to experience live music,” he said.

“The Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon will add a compelling new dimension to that offering – enhancing the visitor experience while contributing to the vibrancy of Victoria’s creative sector.”

Construction is scheduled for completion in the coming months, followed by an official opening mid-year.

ENDS

MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

Media contact

For all media enquiries, please contact:

Isabel Campbell

isabel@communicationscollective.com.au

0493 673 172

About Melbourne Recital Centre

Melbourne Recital Centre is an award-winning live music destination championing the best local and international artists and ensembles across its acoustically renowned performance spaces, the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Primrose Potter Salon and the soon-to-open Peter and Ruth McMullin Beacon. As a preeminent venue for experiencing live music in Australia, Melbourne Recital Centre celebrates music in all its extraordinary forms and creates authentic and intimate live experiences for all ages.