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Budget Fails to Invest in Jobs and Growth for Live Performance Industry

The Budget fails to deliver jobs and growth for Australia's live performance industry -- but the worst news is yet to come.

Live Performance Australia (LPA) Chief Executive, Evelyn Richardson, said "This Budget is supposed to be focused on jobs and growth. But the live performance industry and the broader arts industry are completely missing from the Government's vision for the Australian economy. This Budget fails to deliver jobs and growth for our industry. It fails to deliver any major new policy initiatives or programs."

The worst news is yet to come for small to medium performing arts companies when the full legacy of the 2015 Budget cut to Australia Council funding is realised in the next fortnight.

LPA President, Andrew Kay, said "This is not a cut to the arts. This is a full scale cull. We are very concerned that due to unprecedented funding cuts to the Australia Council last year, the legacy of the 2015 Budget will become very real next week when the Australia Council makes its funding announcements. We expect to see 40 percent of our small to medium companies lose funding and face going under. That's 18 to 20 companies that won't be creating new productions, hundreds of creative and talented Australians out of work and lost revenue.

"These cuts will have huge flow on effects impacting all parts of our industry including the major performing arts companies, venues, festivals and the commercial sector. We are particularly concerned about losing our creative and technical talent who may be forced to go offshore for work and career development opportunities".

LPA Chief Executive Evelyn Richardson said "The Government must commit to return the \$72.8 million over 4 years it took from the Australia Council last year so that our major funding body can deliver its Strategic Plan, including investing in the small to medium sector.

"While we were pleased to see the government respond to our call to ensure Catalyst funding was fully committed for 2015/16 and welcome yesterday's announcement of grant recipients, this does not address in any way the imminent threat of significant job losses and the demise of core companies that are critical to our industry. We were also disappointed to note that funding will not be continued for Sounds Australia which supports our local music industry overseas.

"The live performance industry employs 34,000 people and generates gross output of \$2.5 billion. It supports more than 500 performing arts companies around Australia, and attracts more than 18 million Australians to shows in capital cities, regional centres and country towns. More Australians in a year will see a live show than AFL, NRL, A-League, Super Rugby, Test Cricket and the Big Bash combined.

"We look forward to the Opposition Leader setting out his vision for supporting growth and jobs in our industry in his Budget reply speech.

"LPA is calling on all political parties to step up and support new investment in companies and jobs for our \$2.5 billion industry," Ms Richardson said.

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About LPA

LPA is the peak body for Australia's live performance industry. Established in 1917 and registered as an employers' organisation under the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*, LPA has over 400 Members nationally. We represent commercial producers, music promoters, major performing arts companies, small to medium companies, independent producers, major performing arts centres, metropolitan and regional venues, commercial theatres, stadiums and arenas, arts festivals, music festivals, and service providers such as ticketing companies and technical suppliers. Our membership spans from small-medium and not-for-profit organisations to large commercial entities.

LPA has a clear mandate to advocate for and support policy decisions that benefit the sustainability and growth of the live performance industry in Australia.