



Media Release – For immediate release

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## Live Performance Australia exposes full impact of Black Friday cull for performing arts

There is no rhyme or reason to the funding cuts inflicted on Australia's live performance industry following detailed analysis of both the Catalyst and Australia Council four year funding grants by Live Performance Australia.

LPA Chief Executive Evelyn Richardson said: 'Almost forty per cent of small to medium companies which received project funding through the Catalyst program had their longer term operational funding cut by the Australia Council.'

'The Coalition Government has no plan to drive jobs and growth in the live performance industry, preferring instead a chaos theory approach reflected in these funding decisions.

'21 small to medium performing arts companies have been completely defunded, while others have suffered reductions in their four year funding.

'Highly regarded, successful companies with a proven track record in creating new and innovative work as well as building our international reputation or taking live performance to regional audiences have lost funding as a result of these decisions by the Minister and the Australia Council.

'Ad-hoc decision making on funding programs is no way to support the growth of our \$2.5 billion live performance industry which supports 34,000 jobs,' Ms Richardson said.

LPA President Andrew Kay said: 'Last Friday the 13th was indeed a black day for the arts in Australia. This was the cull we had long feared.

'Not only were the savagery of the cuts a black mark on the Turnbull Government but they were an almighty fail against the Australia Council, an organisation established and funded by ongoing governments to "champion the arts" in Australia,' Mr Kay said.

LPA's analysis shows:

- **Less than 50 per cent** of the 262 applicants for Four Year Funding from the Australia Council were **successful** indicating huge unmet demand for support across the arts.
- **Overall 13 per cent reduction in number of companies funded** (128 companies have received funding - down from 147 previously).
- **37 per cent of live performance companies that received Catalyst project funding actually lost operational funding.**
- 21 Performing arts companies have been defunded – **one-third of all companies** to lose funding.
- Companies in **VIC, QLD and NSW have borne the brunt of funding cuts** – with up to half of performing arts key organisations in those states losing their funding entirely.
- Home state of the Minister for the Arts, **Victoria, has fared worst** with 8 live performance companies de-funded, followed by NSW (7) and QLD (3).



- No new live performance companies supported in **QLD, SA and ACT**.
- Live performance key organisations employed 7,436 people in 2014 – based on funding cuts, this **could affect more than 1,300 jobs**.
- **Funding cuts may also affect attendance** – almost 1 million people attended live performance events by key organisations in 2014. Cuts to funding may see attendance drop by up to 180,000.
- **Music sector hardest hit** with 7 out of 13 key organisations defunded and no new live music companies supported. 2 of the defunded companies are music festivals in regional areas.
- **12 theatre key organisations defunded**, many of which are highly reputable, award-winning and well-established companies.

LPA is calling for the return of \$72.8 million funding which was cut from the Australia Council in the 2015 Budget, as part of the Brandis 'National Program for Excellence in the Arts' experiment.

LPA has this week met with the ALP and Greens to discuss arts funding in the context of its policy priorities for the federal election. We are still seeking a meeting with the Minister for the Arts, Senator Fifield.

## **ENDS**

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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.