



LPA disputes Turnbull funding claim on Q&A

Dear Member

The Australian ran a story today on LPA's Letter to the Prime Minister dated 21 June 2016:

Arts industry body Live Performance Australia has rejected as "completely incorrect" Malcolm Turnbull's claims about arts funding made on ABC television's Q&A on Monday night.

The Prime Minister responded to a question from the panel discussion program's host, Tony Jones, about returning Catalyst funds to the Australia Council, saying "the issue hasn't arisen".

In a letter to Turnbull's office, LPA says the Prime Minister's statement on the program was "completely incorrect", as there have been repeated calls from the arts sector and opposition parties for Australia Council funding to be restored in full.

"Live Performance Australia's No 1 policy priority for this election has been the return of \$72.8 million to the Australia Council," LPA chief executive Evelyn Richardson says. She says LPA's position has been communicated to Turnbull's office and to Arts Minister Mitch Fifield, who has yet to meet LPA despite "repeated requests".

On a day of action about arts funding last Friday, a group of about 200 people protested outside Turnbull's Wentworth electorate office in Sydney.

Turnbull was asked about funding on Monday's program by singer Katie Noonan, artistic director of the Queensland Music Festival. The festival was one of several organisations "defunded" as a result of Coalition cuts to the Australia Council, the LPA letter says.

Noonan asked Turnbull if he would commit to a "strong, completely independent" Australia Council.

In reply, Turnbull said funding through the Coalition's new Catalyst fund had "almost entirely gone to regional companies, to smaller regional companies in Australia who had been ... seen to be missing out on funding from the Australia Council".

LPA's letter says the statement is incorrect and that "only 37 per cent has been allocated to projects in regional and remote areas".

About 38 per cent has been allocated to metropolitan areas and 24 per cent for international activities.

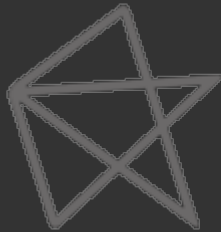
The letter points out that the Coalition's restructure of arts funding led to a Senate inquiry that produced 2700 public submissions and has been the subject of ongoing debate. LPA says the live performance industry generates \$2.5 billion in economic activity and supports 34,000 Australian jobs.

"It is disappointing that with just over a week remaining to the election, the Coalition is yet to announce any strategic vision or policy direction for the arts sector in Australia, an exemplar industry in creating jobs and driving economic growth through creativity and innovation," Richardson's letter says.

A copy of the article can be found [here](#).

Kind regards,

Evelyn Richardson
LPA Chief Executive



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