



PM Wrong on Arts Funding; Election Update

Dear Member

On Tuesday 21 June LPA's Chief Executive sent the following letter to the Prime Minister in response to his comments on ABC's Q&A program:

21 June 2016

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

Funding for the Australia Council

I am writing in response to comments you made about the level of funding provided to the Australia Council on Monday night's 'Q & A' program on ABC TV. It is important to correct the information you provided in your answers.

Catalyst funding

You stated that: *'It has almost entirely gone to regional companies, to smaller regional companies in Australia who had been seen to be missing out from funding from the Australia Council.'* Later, you said: *'But all I can say to you is that the money that's been spent through the Catalyst program has gone to regional arts companies.'*

This statement is incorrect. In the Catalyst funding announced to date by the Minister for the Arts, only 37 per cent has been allocated to projects in regional and remote areas. 38 per cent has been allocated to metropolitan areas, and 24 per cent has been allocated for international activities.

Furthermore, as a result of the Coalition Government's cuts to the Australia Council, a number of highly-regarded and successful regional small-to-medium arts companies have been de-funded, including performing arts companies. This includes the JUTE Theatre Company in Cairns, the Queensland Music Festival which presented events throughout regional and rural Queensland, and the Wangaratta Festival of Jazz in Victoria. Companies which took productions to regional Australia have also had their funding cut including KAGE and Snuff Puppets. Both these companies received Catalyst funding but lost their operational funding from the Australia Council.

Restoration of funding to the Australia Council

You were asked about returning funding to the Australia Council, to which you replied: *'Well Tony the issue hasn't arisen. I mean you've raised it here ...'*

Again, regrettably your statement was completely incorrect.

The Coalition Government's funding cuts to the Australia Council have been the subject of ongoing and widespread representations from across the arts sector, including peak organisations such as ours.

There was a Senate inquiry into the new funding arrangements announced by Senator Brandis which attracted more than 2,700 public submissions. The subject was canvassed at length at the national arts debate held on 8 June 2016 as part of this election campaign which was attended by Senator Fifield. Both the Labor Party and the Greens have made policy announcements about returning funding to the Australia Council. Most recently the Nick Xenophon Team (NXT) announced their arts policy which included restoration of funding. There was a National Day of Action last Friday 17 June involving artists and performers around Australia. There have been numerous stories in the national media and the topic has also been extensively canvassed on social media.

Live Performance Australia's number one policy priority for this election has been the return of \$72.8 million to the Australia Council. This has been communicated to your office as well as the Minister for the Arts who still has not been able to accommodate our repeated requests for a meeting on behalf of Australia's live performance industry which 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.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters in more detail with you.

For reference, I have attached a copy of our election policy priorities, released on 2 June 2016 which includes our call for the return of funding to the Australia Council.

Yours sincerely,

Evelyn Richardson
LPA Chief Executive

A copy of LPA's Letter to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull can be found [here](#).

Small Start, Big Art

PLEASE SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

LPA's **Small Start, Big Art** concludes tomorrow (Friday 24 June) with the **release of our compilation video**.

The compilation video will be available via our [Facebook page](#) and [Youtube Channel](#).

We would greatly appreciate if you would share this video widely through your social media networks!

Final Call to Action Before Election Day

We are now in the final stretch!

With just over a week left we are calling on Members to **contact your local federal candidates** (if you have not done so already), voicing your support for the live performance industry and concern about the impact of funding cuts on live performance in your community.

You can use LPA's template letter to email your federal candidates as per below:

Dear [candidate],

On 13 May, the Australia Council announced cuts in funding for small to medium arts companies which are the legacy of the Coalition Government's 2015 budget cuts to the Australia Council.

Our small to medium companies are a vital part of the live performance industry in our state.

They are innovators, they develop new and emerging talent, they provide jobs and career paths for talented Australians on and off the stage. These cuts will have flow on effects across the live performance industry, including performing arts companies, venues, festivals and the commercial sector.

We risk losing our creative and technical talent overseas in pursuit of job and career opportunities no longer available to them in Australia.

I am writing to seek your support for the return of \$72.8 million in funding to the Australia Council that has been cut by the Coalition so that we can continue to support a dynamic, growing and sustainable live performance industry in Australia.

I look forward to hearing from you.

[name /email]

A list of candidate contact details can be found [here](#).

We also encourage you to join the conversation on LPA's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) sites. Repost and tweet our key messages through your social media channels.

Kind regards,

Evelyn Richardson
LPA Chief Executive



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