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Curtains close on Catalyst but Budget fails to deliver encore performance

Dear Member,

The Federal Government handed down the **2017-18 Budget** tonight.

LPA RESPONSE TO FEDERAL BUDGET 2017-18

LPA has reiterated its call for Government to support long term vision and investment in the live performance industry.

The Turnbull Government has repaired some of the damage done to Australia's performing arts sector in the 2017/18 Budget, but it still lacks a long-term strategic vision for the live performance industry.

The Government is providing \$90.2 million over five years from 2016-17 to return funding to the Australia Council which had been cut from the 2014 budget. (This includes a \$10 million contribution from the Australia Council's own reserves over two years.) This had been foreshadowed by the Minister for the Arts in March this year.

'We welcome the restoration of funding to the Australia Council but the harsh reality is the cuts and uncertainty inflicted on small to medium performing arts companies over the past few years have already taken their toll,' said LPA Chief Executive, Evelyn Richardson.

'For some of our small to medium companies, it's too little too late.

'It is disappointing that the Turnbull Government hasn't adopted any of the targeted measures proposed by LPA to stimulate investment and innovation in the live performance industry and to strengthen its contribution to the Australian economy,' Ms Richardson said.

LPA's full media release in response to the Federal Budget is available [here](#).

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

The Budget states that the Government will provide **\$90.2 million over five years from 2016-17** to enable the Australia Council to support the Arts sector by continuing to meet the higher demand for grants from artists and organisations.

As previously announced by the Minister for Communications and the Arts, Senator Mitch Fifield (18 March 2017), this includes a total of **\$80.2 million over four years in committed and uncommitted funds that will be transferred to the Australia Council from 2017-18**. This includes:

- **\$61M in uncommitted Catalyst funds** (including \$32M previously announced in late 2015). Four companies will share in a total of **\$3.4M** from this funding including **Opera Queensland, Victorian Opera, Queensland Ballet, and Australian Brandenburg Orchestra**. This funding will also include the final grant round of the current Catalyst program which is yet to be determined.
- **\$12M in Catalyst grants** already allocated now to be managed by the Australia Council
- **\$6.1M** for the **Major Festivals Initiative**
- **\$1.1M** for the **Australian World Orchestra** under an existing funding arrangement

Additional expense measures for the Department of Communications and the Arts included:

- **\$36M** over four years from 2017-18 for **broadcasting and film/tv content reform**.
- **\$6.1M** over two years from 2017-18 to support **community radio stations** in regional and metropolitan areas across Australia.
- As part of the cross portfolio *Public Service Modernisation Fund*, the Government will provide **\$48.5M** over three years from 2017-18 to support Australia's **national cultural institutions** including the National Gallery of Australia, National Museum of Australia, National Portrait Gallery, Australian National Maritime Museum, National Film and Sound Archive and the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. Minister Fifield's Media Release on this initiative is available [here](#).

SMALL BUSINESS

The Budget introduces the following measures that may affect LPA Members:

- Extends the 2015-16 Budget measure **expanding accelerated depreciation for small businesses by 12 months to 30 June 2018** for businesses with aggregated annual turnover less than \$10M. Small businesses will be able to immediately deduct purchases of eligible assets costing less than \$20,000 first used or installed ready for use by 30 June 2018.
- Establishment of the **\$300M National Partnership on Regulatory Reform** for Government to work with the states and territories to cut their red tape.

IMMIGRATION - VISA CHANGES AND CHARGES

The Budget introduces the following changes to visas:

- **From 1 July 2017, the Government will index visa application charges in line with the forecast CPI published annually in the Budget.**
- As previously announced, the Government will **abolish the Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa and replace it with a new Temporary Skill Shortage visa**. The new visa will comprise two streams: a short term stream allowing entry for up to two years and a medium term stream allowing entry for up to four years. The visa application charges will be **increased from the current \$1,060 per primary 457 visa to \$1,150 per primary visa for the short term stream and \$2,400 per primary visa for the medium term stream**.
- The Government is introducing a **Skilling Australians Fund Levy**. From March 2018, businesses that employ foreign workers on certain skilled visas will be required to pay a levy that will provide revenue for this initiative. LPA will provide further details on the potential impact of this Levy on LPA Members in due course.

ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION

Further information on the 2017–18 Federal Budget can be found via:

- [Federal Budget 2017–18 Papers](#)
- [Department of Communications and the Arts](#) (including portfolio budget statements)
- [Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Media Release](#)

Any additional Federal Budget details that arise will be communicated to Members.

Should you have any queries with regard to the measures outlined within the Federal Budget 2017–18, please contact the [LPA Office](#) via email or phone (03) 8614 2000.



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