

Last night's #FreeTheArts Adelaide meeting gathered over 100 of SA's Arts Community members

Over 100 arts industry representatives attended the #FreeTheArts movement meeting organised by the Arts Industry Council of SA on Thursday night.

This meeting was held in the lead up to the Senate Inquiry public hearing scheduled for today, Friday 18 September, from 8:30am – 4pm at the Quest on Franklin.

"The South Australian arts industry wants to be a part of the national action calling for reinstatement of the funding for small to medium arts organisations in Australia," said Arts Industry Council of SA (AICSA) Chair, Gail Kovatseff.

"The restructure of Federal arts funding will have a devastating effect for South Australia," Kovatseff said. "South Australia could potentially lose up to 1/3 of its small to medium arts organisations. This includes currently funded companies in theatre, dance, disability arts, visual arts and many more. These are the places South Australians go on the weekends, where children at schools are first exposed to art. This will have a big impact on all South Australians."

The Thursday night meeting at the Adelaide Festival Centre was to both prepare for the upcoming Senate Inquiry public hearing and to hear direct from #FreeTheArts movement members. South Australia has an active and vocal arts industry sector, led by the Arts Industry Council of SA.

"We organised last night to come together and unleash the force of South Australia's cultural voice."

Kovatseff advised that this was only the beginning of the campaign to protest against the \$104.8 million of arts funding sequestered in the 2014-15 Commonwealth Budget for the National Program for Excellence in the Arts.

Arts industry professionals were vocal in their agreement that this quarantining of funding, previously allocated through a transparent peer-assessed process at the Australia Council, must be reversed.

Nearly 30 artists and organisations are presenting to the Senate Inquiry public hearing today, only a small representation of the over 2200 submissions made.

"We are calling on all South Australians to join us in lobbying the Federal Government to reinstate this arts funding," Kovatseff continued. "Excellence is a subjective term and we need all Australians to remember – the excellence of tomorrow comes from the innovation shown every day in the small to medium arts sector."

"Last night was a demonstration of how strong we are as an arts industry and we will continue to be a part of the #FreeTheArts movement and raise our voices nationally to reinstate the federal arts funding to a clear, arms length, peer reviewed funding model."

#FreeTheArts is a national campaign responding to Federal Government cuts to the Australia Council, and the establishment of the National Programme for Excellence in the Arts. It also aims to connect the arts sector in responding to key national challenges of funding, policy and advocacy. www.freethearts.com.au

The Arts Industry Council of SA is the state's independent, sector wide representative arts body. www.aicsa.net.au