

## **South Australia's Arts Community respond to changes to Federal Arts Funding at Senate Inquiry Public Hearing**

Following a number of submissions from the South Australian Arts community to the Senate Inquiry into the Impact of the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Budget decisions on the Arts, Senator Glenn Lazarus will chair a public hearing in Adelaide this Friday, 18 September 2015, to be held at the Conference Room, Quest on Franklin, Franklin St. Over 2,200 submissions have been made to the Senate Inquiry nationally.

The Senate Inquiry was triggered by Federal Arts Minister George Brandis' announcement in May, to sequester \$104.8 million from the Australia Council for the Arts over four years in order to create the new National Programme for Excellence in the Arts (NPEA). The moves by Senator Brandis have been met with widespread concern amongst the arts industry and have been the subject of major national protests.

The Arts Industry Council of SA (AICSA) has been instrumental in attracting a hearing to South Australia. AICSA has expressed grave concerns that the move of funding from the Australia Council to the NPEA will have a catastrophic impact on the small to medium sector and individual artists (who will not be able to apply to the NPEA for funds). While small to medium arts organisations may apply for funding from the NPEA, they will be competing with larger, better resourced arts organisations, and the new program will not support organisational capacity but rather be restricted to project funding. AICSA is also deeply concerned by the NPEA's lack of the peer-reviewed, arm's length methodology, currently required of the Australia Council of the Arts. The Federal Government Draft Guidelines for the NPEA suggest that the new arts funding program will use 'at least three assessors' for each grant – chosen and appointed by the Ministry, including Ministry personnel, with the Minister signing off.

The Arts Industry Council of South Australia (AICSA) Chair, Gail Kovatseff said *"Arts Industry Council of South Australia lobbied hard for a public hearing and we are pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the issues affecting independent artists and the small to medium arts sectors who have been affected by changes to funding in the most recent federal budget."*

Through their submissions to the Senate Inquiry, the South Australian Arts community will highlight the impact of the changes to federal arts funding on small to medium arts organisations and individual artists and call for the funding removed from the Australia Council's budget to be restored to the Australia Council for the Arts. Representatives from AICSA, Country Arts SA, Brink Productions, Windmill Theatre, Slingsby, Festivals Adelaide, Nexus Arts, Community Arts Network of South Australia, Vitalstatistix and State Theatre Company of South Australia, as well as independent artists, have been invited to give evidence to the Senate Committee.

A program for Friday's public hearing will be released on the [Senate Committee's website](#) closer to the day, allowing media to determine when would be best to attend the hearing.

Responding to the Federal Budget changes, a national 'Free The Arts' campaign has also been launched, uniting the Arts sector in their response to the policy changes. There will be a *Free The Arts* event held at the Adelaide Festival Centre on Thursday 17 September at 5.00pm, ahead of the Senate Inquiry hearing on Friday.