

# ARTS INDUSTRY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

*an independent  
voice for the arts*

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Friday 15 May 2015

Dear Senator,

We write to you following the 2015-16 Federal Budgets announcements.

We congratulate you on a successful negotiation of the arts budget, maintaining commitments at the previous year's level.

The Arts Industry Council of SA would like to take also this opportunity to express our support for the Australia Council and what it represents in terms of best practice mechanisms facilitating the development and delivery of arts practice in Australia.

Assessment by industry peers ensures a decision-making process, which is knowledgeable, diverse and free from any single or restricted viewpoint. Further, arms length funding guarantees that these robustly made decisions are the ones to be delivered. These mechanisms have been the process by which this country has grown a vibrant arts culture in our cities and many of our regions.

The National Programme For Excellence in the Arts which is now being set up following the transference of \$104.7 million from the Australia Council, carries the potential for these significant funds to be distributed in ways contrary to current standards. We ask what decision mechanisms will be required of the new National Programme? If they no longer will be those of the Australia Council and other government funding bodies, we ask how any new mechanisms will be tested against best practice?

As you will be aware, there is much concern in the arts sector and the wider community about the impact the removal of \$104.7million from the Australia Council will have on the small to medium arts sector. This sector is not only the incubator of new works but is where the arts' workforce development and generational renewal takes place. This sector effectively represents the small business community of the Australian arts industry. There are hundreds of jobs and livelihoods at risk. These concerns warrant your serious consideration. We note that the Treasurer's key aim in the 2015-6 Budget is to set up the conditions for Australians to have a go – for many in the arts, it is in the small to medium sector where they do first have a go.

We thank you for taking your time with these matters.

Yours sincerely,



Gail Kovatseff (Chair)  
On behalf the Executive Committee  
Arts Industry Council of South Australia, Inc