

## **SA's Arts Industry says 'Culture Counts: No to Arts Funding Cuts'**

Arts Industry Council of South Australia (AICSA) will host a rally next Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April to voice their concerns about the State Government's proposed progressive cuts to the State's Arts Budget over the next three years. This comes at a time when the arts sector is bracing itself for the impact of the dramatic cuts to the Australia Council for the Arts' national budget.

The South Australian Government is proposing to progressively reduce Government spending on the arts over the coming triennium, with cuts rising to \$8.5 million per annum (7%) from 2018/19. These proposed State budget funding cuts will significantly amplify the impact of the Federal Government's cuts to the Australia Council. At the very least, it is expected to lead to the closure of a number of arts organisations, a cause for grave concern among South Australia's arts industry about the future of the small to medium arts sector.

**AICSA Chair, Gail Kovatseff**, says, *"Locally, Arts South Australia research indicates that in 2014 the small to medium arts sector received less than 2% of the SA Government arts budget, but had local audiences of over 700,000. This indicates both their efficiency and their high impact on the lives of their fellow South Australians."*

On Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April at midday, the South Australian Arts industry will stand on the steps of Parliament House to highlight the negative impact of the funding cuts on artists, arts organisations, arts programs and audiences in South Australia. These cuts seriously threaten the future of South Australia's arts industry.

Amongst the speakers at Tuesday's rally will be **State Theatre Company Executive Director Rob Brookman**, who said *"This is not just an issue relating to the richness and diversity of our culture and the vibrancy of our community; it's also now a serious issue of employment and our end of the economy. While it is a relatively small industry, the arts are an economic driver that deliver great outcomes for our city and State at marginal cost."*

It has previously been announced that the Adelaide Festival will receive a substantial cut and many other major arts organisations have also been forewarned that they too will receive funding cuts. This has been met with widespread concern from South Australia's arts industry about the future of South Australia's creative economy.

Gail Kovasteff said *"The proposed state budget cuts have the potential to drive a generation of artists either out of our state or out of our industry. While the impact on the larger organisations may be managed - at a cultural cost - the small to medium sector is likely to lose entire arts companies if the State Government cuts also go ahead."*

The Federal funding cuts to small to medium arts organisations, driven by the removal of \$18 million per annum from the Australia Council for the Arts Budget, will have far-reaching effects nationally. The combination of cuts from both Federal and State sources, however, is set to create a perfect storm that will have a devastating impact on the State's economy and reputation as a home for the creative industries.

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

[www.aicsa.net.au](http://www.aicsa.net.au)

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