From: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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To: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dear: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In the lead up to the July federal election there is an important issue that will decide my vote. I am an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (*insert arts manager, arts lover, musician, visual artist, actor, director, designer, filmmaker, writer, producer, etc*) from South Australia.

The party governing Australia from July 2016 must commit to creating a national arts, cultural and creative industries policy that is tripartisan and that acknowledges the centrality of creativity and innovation to Australians’ health and wellbeing. It must have a policy of investment in the arts that reflects the true economic value and societal impact of the sector to Australia, which is a substantially greater sum than that raised by replacing the recent cuts. To flourish and grow, this sector must have sustainability.

Australia's cultural sector contributes $50 billion towards the country’s GDP including over $4.2 billion from the arts\*, employs more than 124,000 people (both FT & PT workers)\*\* and attracts more than two million international tourists a year\*.

According to its own figures, the mining industry employs significantly fewer people than the cultural sector. The creative industries employ more people than agriculture, construction AND mining and contribute as much as 75% of the economic benefit of the mining sector.\*\* From any perspective, the arts industry is a far better investment in our country’s economic future. It is time to act accordingly.

The arts, cultural and creative industries have a major impact across our economy and society. It is well documented that the creative industries help deliver imaginative solutions across education, mental health, physical wellbeing, corrections and community cohesion. It drives new jobs, growth and innovation.

Your response, and your party’s response, to this letter will decide my vote at the election. I will share your response widely. My preferences will fall to candidates who value the arts and who are committed to funding them on a level that ensures their sustainability and growth.

I look forward to your prompt response. If I don’t hear from you, I can only assume you have no opinion on this important matter.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*Australia Council Arts Nation 2015 report \*\* Australian Bureau of Statistics

**The following paragraphs can be inserted into the letter template, according to area of personal concern**.

* It is well documented that music education enhances a child’s learning across areas of health and intellectual development. Music education programs in schools have been decimated across the country. It is important that these programs are reinstated in all school curriculums in Australia. Close to 70% of state primary school children in Australia currently do not have access to a decent music education.
* The Gonski plan for education was designed to address the widening inequality that is the malaise of contemporary Australian society. I urge the Federal Government to supports its complete implementation, ensuring equal access to quality education for each and every Australian. The Commonwealth government should provide increased capital funding to all schools, government and non-government, and there should be a greater monitoring and reporting on school infrastructure in all sectors and states.
* STEAM, not STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, ARTS, Maths: provides a fundamental, well rounded education. Valuing and recognising the centrality of creativity to Australian society should be reflected in the mandatory inclusion of the arts to our national school science based curriculum, with appropriate emphasis placed on the training of teachers.
* In Australia, the mining sector is subsidised to the tune of $17.6 billion while the TOTAL cultural subsidy in Australia is around $7 billion. In South Australia alone, annual box office in the arts sector delivers $6.4million. Most of this profit stays in Australia. The arts don’t damage the environment. According to its own figures, the mining industry employs significantly fewer people than the cultural sector. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the creative industries employ more people than agriculture, construction AND mining and contribute as much as 75% of the economic benefit of the mining sector. From any perspective, the arts industry is a far better investment in our country’s economic future. It is time to act accordingly.
* I ask that the Australia Council budgets be returned to 2013 levels. The 2015 Senate Inquiry into recent arts cuts recommended that the restoration of funding to the Australia Council diverted from it in the 2014 and 2015 budgets and MYEFO.
* I ask that the new Catalyst program be continued, but with increased funds. Its funding processes should be kept in line with best practice in regard to adherence to guidelines, peer assessment, transparency and an even-handed distribution of funds across rounds and years
* The development of a tri-partisan arts policy within a framework based on, and quantifying, the arts’ intrinsic value and the role it plays in contributing to the creative economy and significant impact on jobs and growth. The 2015 Senate Inquiry into these arts cuts noted the absence of such a coherent and clear arts policy supported by evidence-based analysis by the current government.