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Nicole Baer: Okay. Welcome to the National Arts Election Debate. Thank you all for coming. My name is Nichole Baer. My name is Nichole Baer. I am the director of Theater Network Australia and I am the co-convenor of ArtsPeak. I'd like to pay my respects to the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to elders past, present, and future. I would like to welcome to the stage Auntie Georgina Nicholson from the Waradjuri Tribe Land Council who will be doing a welcome to country for us. Thank you, Auntie.

[00:01:00]

Georgina N: Thank you, Nichole. [foreign language 00:01:29] Welcome. Hello. My name is Georgina Nicholson and I am a part Waradjuri woman. Waradjuri being part of the Kulin Nation. The Kulin Nation is made up of five clans and they are Waradjuri, Bunurong, Wathaurung, Djadjawurung, and Taungurong. Waradjuri being all of Melbourne's CBD area and the surrounding country, extending north to the great dividing ranges, east to Mount Baw Baw, south to Mordialloc Creek, and west to the mouth of Werribee River where it then becomes Wathaurung Country.

[00:02:00]

I would like to acknowledge and pay my respect to our ancestors who walked this land as free spirits, to our elders past and present, to all Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other elders here today all cultures. Welcome. I would also like to acknowledge all of the dignitaries in the room today and the people who are watching today. [foreign language 00:02:56] I'd just like to tell you the meaning of what I've just said to you. Welcome to the land of the Waradjuri People.

[00:03:00]

Our mother Martha Margaret Nicholson [Neeterick 00:03:13] was delivered by her grandmother, Granny Jemima, and that was under a Pine tree on Coranderrk Aboriginal Mission near Healesville. Our mother was already learning the importance of family and culture. Years later, our mother met a deadly Irishman. Deadly yes, oh yes, called Patrick nicknamed Patty. They met on a blind date in the early 1930's in Melbourne. In 1937, Mommy and Daddy were married in a registry office and they had 16 children. Woo!

[00:04:00]

A lot of loving. Yes. I know. It's a lot of children and they're all single babies, no twins. It blows me away every time I say that and I always wait for the wow factor. We didn't have no car them days, no contraception, and no TV so there you go. That explains it and a lot of loving. We settled in Healesville for a little while. Myself being the youngest of these 16 children and the oldest is Pat Auckwell. For people that may know Pat Auckwell, she is an amazing, very active senior elder, very active involved on boards, committees, housing, curie courts, and the list goes on.

[00:05:00]

In fact, last year she was nominated by an organization for the Victorian Aboriginal Honor Roll. It's been a long time coming, but it has happened. There actually is a book in Parliament House in Melbourne for people to read. It's on public display for you to read Pat's life story. For being the oldest, she made a lot of sacrifices as a young girl to help Mommy with the younger kids because Daddy was in the Air Force so he had to keep taking leave, and in the end he ended up getting a job at a

sawmill in Healesville and he used to ride a push bike.

[00:06:00] We lived up in Birdwood Avenue, which was known as “Hell of a Hill,” and that’s what they called it for locals Hell of a Hill because it was like that straight up. Daddy would stop at the little shop at the bottom of the hill and grab two bags of shopping and put them on his handle bars and ride up that hill to Mommy and come home to Mommy and the kids. He was an amazing man. I just want to thank my mother for my Aboriginality and my father for my Irish heritage. Sadly, both our parents have now passed away and there are only nine of us kids alive.

[00:07:00] We do have a lot of loss, too much sadness in our family, and that leaves me with a very heavy heart. We must carry on the culture for our people and most importantly for our future generations so they can keep handing it down to their children and keep it alive, keep it going because Aboriginal culture is the oldest and richest culture that I know of. I would like to thank you for having me along today to do the Welcome to Country for this very special event today. I hope that you all have a good day together or a good few hours and may your yarnning session be heard. Thank you.

Tamara Winikof: [00:08:00] Thanks very much, Auntie Georgina and I would like, too, to pay my respects to the Waradjuri People elders past, present, and future, and to say what a privilege it is to be invited onto your country. Thank you. I just very briefly want to talk about my family, which is the Arts Family and I am here to welcome you to this event, which has been staged by ArtsPeak. ArtsPeak is the confederation of all the national peak arts organizations and special interest organizations, and has been going now for 18 years, but the last 18 months have been particularly interesting and exciting.

[00:09:00] We live in interesting times, of course. We have worked much more extensively now with a whole range of other organizations and individual artists who have been so active and made such a huge contribution to the one voice that is emerging out of all of the activity over the last 18 months. We are very pleased to be able to present this event for you today and for the people who are watching on live stream and it’s providing us all with an opportunity to hear from our political leaders to hear what their vision is for the arts, both for the present and for the longer and short and long term future.

I think for all of us in this room it’s a particularly critical issue. I know the reason you are here is that you want to hear it from the horse’s mouth and to be the first to hear it live. Just quickly, a little bit of housekeeping. The necessity because we’ve got a very short time is for us to have pre-prepared questions. The questioners if you haven’t done so already, could you seat yourselves on this side of the room and close to this mike? When you ask your question, could you please identify yourself and if you represent an organization where you’re from, and keep your question brief.

It’s unfortunate that we won’t have time to take questions from the floor, but there will be an opportunity afterwards for us to continue the conversation a bit

longer so thank you for being here, and let the wild rumpus begin.

[00:10:00]

Nicole Baer:

Thanks, Clara. Just a final word from me. Just to remember for all those people online and at Federation Square give us a big cheer. Thank you. We heard you and to remember to get busy, please. Make a lot of noise on social media and the hashtags that we are using today are #Ausvotesarts and #istandwiththearts. Have a great time and see you soon. Thank you.

Patricia K:

All right. Let's get this show on the road. Hi everyone. I'm short so I have to move the microphone, but you probably already noticed I'm short. I don't have to tell you that. I want to pay my respects to the elders past, present, and future in the land which we stand, the Waradjuri People. Of course, we all ... Well, if you're from Melbourne, live on this land and enjoy all of its excellence every day so thank you very much. My name is Patricia Karvelas. I'm the presenter of Radio National's Drive Program. I've been invited to chair this excellent event. I'm quite excited about it.

[00:11:00]

Welcome to the National Arts Election Debate. It's really our opportunity to understand the position of the major parties on arts and culture. The Minister for Arts and Communication's Mitch Fifield is here as he is the Shadow Minister for the arts and Shadow Attorney General Mark Dreyfus; also Green Dot spokesperson and the member for Melbourne, which is where we are, Adam Bandt. Election or not ... Okay. They want to clap. All right, so far so good for you guys. The day is young, though.

[00:12:00]

Election or not, this is a pivotal time for resetting the relationship between the Australian Government and the creators of the Australian Culture, and some parties have already launched their arts policies. The labor party over the weekend, the Greens and, of course, I know a lot of people are keen to hear from Mitch Fifield a bit more on the Coalition's policies in relation to the arts. In the room today, we have representatives from all art forms and creative industries and from all over the country, including and you can shout if this is your specialty, literature.

Speaker 1:

Yay.

Patricia K:

Dance, screen, games, theater, design, [crosstalk 00:12:17] ...

Speaker 2:

Oh, theater.

Patricia K:

... music, visual arts, community arts and [crosstalk 00:12:26] cultural development and, of course, more so if you've been excluded you can yell at me later. There is also a huge regional and urban online audience. The debate is being live streamed at artspeak.net.au so hopefully people have logged in and they're listening and scrutinizing. It's broadcast on the Federation Square big screen, my favorite of all big screens. I'm mad for this screen. I love it. Live Tweeted with the hashtag ausvotesarts, which has already been trending throughout the week, actually,

before this even began so that's pretty good.

[00:13:00] It's pretty exciting if you're trending already and it will be broadcast by RNs, ABC's Books and Arts Program this Monday the 13th of June. Everything we say is on the record. Questions have been developed by close collaboration. All speakers have had the chance to think through the questions and, also, prepare their answers so there are no excuses because they know the questions. There won't be ... I'm trying to keep it light, guys. There won't be questions from the floor as I think has already been articulated.

Everyone is encouraged, though, to keep the discussion going using this hashtag across the country where, of course, people are all over this country very devoted to the arts and very keen to hear about the future direction. I will be a strict timekeeper, something I'm very committed to, actually, and moderated to insure that everyone can be heard and, of course, people stick to their times. I'll also insure that speakers don't talk over one another. We do want to have a respectful debate.

[00:14:00] That also means even if you hear something you don't necessarily like, let's just listen and respect each other as much as we possibly can. First up though, each speaker will have an opportunity to make their position clear, a statement of what they're intentions are in this area. We're going to begin with Mitch Fifield. He is the Minister for Communications as well as the Minister for the Arts. The question he is going to answer and then, of course, everyone will answer the same question is: What's your vision for Australia's arts and culture and what's your plan for making this happen? Please welcome, Mitch Fifield.

Mitch Fifield: Well, thanks so much, Patricia. I'm sure I speak on the behalf of all of us when I say that more Karvelas is never enough so thanks so much for taking good care of us today. Can I also thank Auntie Georgina for her welcome to us and myself acknowledge the tradition owners of the land on which we meet. It is appropriate that we pause and reflect on those who have trod this ground before us and those who will walk this ground after us. Can I thank ArtsPeak for organizing this important forum during the federal election campaign?

[00:15:00] It's great to be here with my colleagues Mark and Adam. Well, ladies and gentlemen, I think the first and most important statement for me to make is that I believe and the government believes in art for art's sake. We believe in the inherent virtue of the creative process and creativity. The arts is not a luxury. The arts is not an add-on. It's not something that's extracurricular. The arts is core to who we are as individuals. The arts is a core to our society. It helps us to interpret the past. The arts help us to make sense of the present and the arts also help us to explore the future.

[00:16:00] The arts are also incredibly important to underpinning the freedom of speech. The arts challenges us. They inspire us. They cajole us. They can be warm and embracing. They can be a confronting and disturbing. That's what the arts should

be. That's what the arts need to be. That's one of the reasons why we have a robust and pluralistic democracy, but none of that is inconsistent with recognizing that the arts are the beating heart of an important part of the Australian economy, the creative economy and creative industries.

[00:17:00]

Something that I really want to do if the government is reelected and if I continue to have the privilege of being the Minister for the Arts is to work with you to bring the arts and the creative industries to the center of our innovation agenda. If we do want to be a truly innovative society and a truly innovative economy, then we need to include the creative energies of those who engage in those endeavors in our society to help underpin and reinforce a real culture of innovation.

Now, I am absolutely committed to the longstanding architecture that we have to support our artistic ecosystem where commonwealth support, essentially, is divided through three mechanisms. Through our great national collecting institutions that are the repository of knowledge and history, and a representation of our great creative endeavors, and increasingly through digitalization and online platforms, they are a resource for the whole nation.

[00:18:00]

They are committed to the Australia Council being the principle advisory body for the government and recognizing that their funding is and should be at arm's length from government and, finally, those programs and those funding that goes through my own department that supports the great national training institutions that supports creative partnerships Australia, that supports the regional arts, that supports important indigenous programs that these are all things which I'm committed to.

[00:19:00]

I do think there is incredible scope, as I say, that we can bring the arts and the creative industries to the heart of our innovation agenda. I look forward to working with you. I am a minister who is open to being shaped by the people in this room and the people beyond this room so that together we can insure that our arts enjoy the good support from government that they deserve so that the nation can benefit from the imagination, the talent, and the wonder that those in this sector share with each other and share with the nation. Thank you very much.

Patricia K:

Thank you, Minister Fifield. Our next speaker is Mark Dreyfus. He is the Shadow Arts Minister and, also, the Shadow Attorney General. He will address the same question. What's your vision for Australia's arts and culture and what's your plan for making this happen? Welcome him to the stage.

Mark Dreyfus:

[00:20:00]

Can I start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Waradjuri People of the Kulin Nation. Thank you, Georgina for the excellent welcome. Thank you all for coming and a big shout out to the people who are braving the cold in Federation Square. It's pretty icy out there. Thanks also to ArtsPeak and the Willow Center for hosting this debate. The arts are central to our lives as Australians. They will be central to a shortened labor government.

The arts define who we are as a modern, innovative, confident, and outward-looking society. The arts are how we express ourselves, how we explain ourselves, how we understand ourselves as Australians. When we tell our stories through the arts, we are creating a chronicle that transmits a shared sense of the Australian self through generations. We need to be aware at all times that our continent is the home of the longest, continuous arts and culture makers on earth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

[00:21:00]

A lively art sector is crucial to our economy. Growing creative industries creates jobs. It keeps talented Australians here at home. The visual arts film, music, theater, and dance all contribute to economic activity across Australia's cities, across Australia's regions, in the remotest parts of our country. At the same time as providing entertainment, delight, and meaning in our lives.

I want to say to you that Labor is the party of the arts and we demonstrated that on Saturday with the cultural policy, the arts and cultural policy that the leader of the opposition Bill Shorten announced with me down at the Malt House, an iconic Melbourne venue. I'll quickly remind you of what the components of it are. It's a package of \$138.5 million in new money, including \$80 million in new money to the Australia Council to restore the preeminent place of the Australia Council as the independent funding body for commonwealth contribution to the arts sector in our society.

[00:22:00]

To confirm as we did on Saturday, something that I made clear last November we do not support the creation of a ministerial slush fund, whatever it is called, and we will return whatever is unspent from the fund that is presently called "Catalyst" and shut it down. Just to go over quickly the other components of the package, a near doubling of the regional arts fund with an additional \$8 million a year to that fund; \$20 million over 3 years, a total of \$60 million to support local television drama to be produced by the ABC; a \$5.4 million package for the live music industry and the final component \$7.1 million for music in schools.

[00:23:00]

I've got to say to you that there has been immense damage done to the arts community in Australia over the two years and nine months of this coalition government. We've had huge cuts to the Australia Council, huge cuts to screen Australia, cuts to our cultural institutions, cuts to all manner of previously funded arts and cultural activity in Australia. Some \$300 million in cuts to the arts sector overall. I'd include in those cuts the savage cuts to the ABC because, of course, the ABC plays an absolutely central role in our arts and cultural life.

[00:24:00]

This, of course, was after promising before the last election that there would be no cuts to the ABC. I'll just remind you that labor went to the last election with a fully-spelled out national cultural policy. We go to this election with a fully-spelled out national cultural policy. We have reaffirmed our commitment to the national cultural policy that was published by Simon Crean as Arts Minister in March 2013, accompanied as it then was with some \$130 million of new money.

It was a cultural policy that was the product of consultation over more than two years and that's why we're sticking with it because have told me as I have been consulting the arts community over the last three years that they want us to continue with creative Australia. It's been written into the Australian Labor Party's national platform at our July conference last year. We will endeavor to ... Is that the one-minute to go?

Patricia K: That's your windup now.

Mark Dreyfus: [00:25:00] That's my windup and I'll windup. I'd say to you again, Labor is the party of the arts. I'll look forward to working with the arts community to repair and restore the damage that's been done over these last three dreadful years of coalition government. Thank you.

Patricia K: That was a very good windup. I've got to say I was impressed by how quickly you did that given I gave you no notice. All right. Our next speaker is Adam Bandt. He is the Green spokesperson for the arts. He is also the member from Melbourne, which is exactly where we are, and he is going to address this question of the Green's policy and vision for Australia's arts and culture.

Adam Bandt: Thanks very much and I also want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that we are on and pay respects to elders past and present, and thank you Auntie Georgina for that warm welcome. Well done and thanks to ArtsPeak and everyone who has been involved in the Free the Arts Campaign.

[00:26:00] If there is one silver lining to come out of the turmoil of the last couple of years it's that you've put arts on the election agenda, and if the fact that there is this many people sitting here and I'm sure thousands in Fed Square, it's testament to the fact that by working together with people inside of Parliament and the community outside we can change what the government thinks about. Now, for the relatively small amount of money that the government puts in we get enormous bang for our buck in Australia.

[00:27:00] Beggar's belief that at a time when we are spending \$5 billion to build twice as many submarines as we need for a small amount of money that will make absolutely no difference to the budget at all, the arts community has had its independence threatened, and organizations have had their very viability threatened for a very small amount of money simply so that if we put aside into what was essentially George Brandis' Vanity Project. Now, we do quite well here in Australia. We have cultural institutions that are accessible to and enjoyed by everyone.

Until recently, we didn't have governments determining what counted as art and therefore what was worthy of funding. We've got literary sectors, screen sectors, and others who tell us stories about ourselves that we all love to hear. The Green's vision is of an expanded, secure and independent arts and culture sector that is nurtured by government so that it thrives in an era of digitization and automation.



[00:28:00] I believe that in this era of significant economic and social change we need arts now more than ever to help us navigate some very choppy waters and to provide us with the creative and intellectual resources that we need to insure that ours is a country that we can be proud of. The Green's Policy starts from the presumption that people are creative and that it's the government's role to foster that creativity. That means to us putting the artist and the creator at the center of government policy.

We were really pleased to be the first ones to announce a comprehensive arts and culture policy and to announce another part of it today and there is still more to come. What would we do? Well, first and foremost, if we're putting artists and creators back at the center arts policy, it means reestablishing the importance of independence and peer review.

It means abolishing Catalyst, whatever it is called because when we get to the stage where government decides what art gets funded, then artists are going to be forced to produce the kind of art that they think that government wants and that's not the kind of country that I want to live in. We have to reestablish the Australia Council as the preeminent body that doles out art grants in this country because we know it works. We also need to reverse the so-called efficiency dividends that's been imposed on our cultural institutions that have brought some of their products to their knees.

[00:29:00] Trove, for example, what a wonderful resource to the whole of the country and, yet, it is being threatened. We should be increasing funding to our national significant cultural institutions, not cutting funding. The second thing we would do is have a sector-led vision for the arts and culture and take advice from you as to what counts as a good and healthy ecosystem. Now, there have been a lot of good things said about the previous government's creative nation policy and I don't think we should change it just for the sake of changing it but, at the moment we are rudderless. The government is operating without any policy.

[00:30:00] The sector is operating without any vision and it is time to develop a new one. There are three specific areas that we would focus on that we think need some special support as well as a broader vision. It's time for a particular approach to what we do with books in an era of digitization and we would ask for a sector-led response on that. Games likewise, and digitization more broadly is something that we can confront. It's 80 years ago that Walter Benjamin told us about the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction.

Well, we now need to think about it in the age of digital reproduction and consumption and insure that we've got all the settings right. Lastly, we need to make sure that being an artist and creative worker is a financially secure endeavor. That means putting aside an amount of money so that public institutions can pay artists for work that they display. It means restarting the Art Start program. It means saying, "Well, if volunteer work can count for the dole, then so should

creative work for those who are perfecting their craft. It means making sure our literary and artistic prizes are tax free.

[00:31:00] It means not only restoring funding to the Australia Council, but doubling what we give to the small and medium sector and the individual artists as part of the Australia Council grants. Culture, to conclude, comes from the root word to care. You see that in agriculture, in cultivate. It's time that we cared for our art sector so that our arts and culture sector can care for us.

Patricia K: I'm going to start operating from the couch now, which is much more comfortable space as we all our. We are moving into the section now where we are going to have industry leaders ask questions. The questions, as we've said, have been specifically really workshopped and devised. Each of you will answer the questions that you hear. You have 90 seconds each to do that. A minute and a half and don't ... A minute and a half to answer the question. It's a very brief answer. Can you manage it? Can you handle it?

Mitch Fifield: Yes, boss.

Patricia K: Okay, good. I'm glad you feel that way. I'm going to start with Rachael Messer. She is going to ask a question around indigenous arts and culture. Thanks Rachael.

[00:32:00] Rachael M: [inaudible 00:32:27] from far north Queensland and Torres Strait. My question is: Indigenous arts and culture ground our nation. How will your government insure both cultural maintenance and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultures are supported and invested in across government portfolio areas?

Patricia K: Why don't we start with Mark Dreyfus?

Mark Dreyfus: Thanks for the question, Rachael. It's a very good question. I'd remind people that the first goal of our creative Australia National Cultural Policy adopted in 2013, not Creative Nation as Adam called it. That was the Keating Government showing the long history Labor has in the arts. The first goal was to recognize, respect, and celebrate the centrality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to the uniqueness of Australia identity. We continue to support that goal.

[00:33:00] The new funding that we've committed to for the Australia Council will insure because a great deal of Australia Council funding goes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the new funding we have committed to the regional arts fund will also insure that funding and support is going to be available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture making.

It's crucial that there be support for the independence of the Australia Council, I regret to say whose very existence has been threatened by the Abbott/Turnbull government, but in essence, it is that funding for the regional arts fund and additional funding for the Australia Council that I say will support Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander peoples in their art and culture making.

Patricia K: Adam Bandt?

Adam Bandt: Well, the Australia Council still managed to give, fortunately, \$16 million in its recent round to Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander groups and that's why for us the priority is not only to restore funding, but increase funding for the small and medium organizations and individual artists because I think that's the stream. If we double ... We want to double that stream, double that stream. That means double the amount of money that's available for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander communities and art.

[00:34:00]

We also want to establish an artist in resident program in Parliament and I think it would be great if the first artist in resident we had was an Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander artist. I think that would help to put it on the agenda. Lastly, I guess I would say that I think strong art requires strong communities and we are pretty pleased to have announced significant new investments, not only reversing the cuts that these governments have made to Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander services, but increasing them because I think if you have strong communities, you'll have strong culture.

Patricia K: Finally, Mitch Fifield. Thanks Patricia. Well, I think the prime mechanism is that the 40 or so million dollars in my portfolio that goes towards indigenous language arts and culture programs in terms of cultural maintenance they do some really important work with language in terms of contemporary indigenous arts. There are visual art centers which they strongly support and there are some really good ways that we can support cultural maintenance.

[00:35:00]

Just an example is the visions program in my department that has given a small grant to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery for a tour of these very intricate and beautiful shell necklaces which are made by indigenous women in Tasmania. That craft was being lost. It's been regained and through the profile that that exhibition will raise there is the opportunity to further support that.

[00:36:00]

Also, the National Maritime Museum is doing some really good work working with communities to help them regain skills in terms of designing canoes, but I think there is some good stuff that we can do across government through IAXIS, which is in the education portfolio and I want to explore with some in Birmingham about how we can work together with that fabulous institution, which is next door to the National Museum to further spread the understanding and knowledge of indigenous culture, language, and arts throughout government.

Patricia K: Thank you. Our next question comes from Liza Lim. She is going to ask a question about independent artists.

Liza Lim: Hello. My name is Liza Lim. I'm a composer and, also, a University Professor of Music. My question is direct funding to artists has been cut by one-third over the

last 25 years and independent artists really took the brunt of last year's cuts. What will you do to champion the work of independent artists and the voice of those artists?

Patricia K: I'll start with Adam Bandt. I'm mixing it up.

Adam Bandt: [00:37:00] I think the first to reverse the cuts and then double the amount of money that the Australia Council has for small and medium organizations and to individual artists because, as you say, that's where the cuts have been felt the hardest and that's where we can most repair the damage and secure the future of Australia Arts.

I think that in terms of the voice, one of the priorities for us would be to establish a national voice for the arts, comprised of people from our relevant cultural institutions but, also, the practitioners themselves so that we don't ever find ourselves in this situation again of having to fight rearguard action against government cuts, but that we've got a coherent voice coming from the sector and advancing what the sector needs.

I think lastly as I referred to making the position of individual artists a little bit more financially secure will go a long way to making them feel more independent and in addition to the measures that I announced around people who are on unemployment benefits would also like to see for people who qualify on low incomes for the low income super inuaded amount, which is \$500 a year.

[00:38:00] If you've been engaged in creative or artistic work for that year, you should also get an additional \$500 top up because if you've been engaged in that endeavor, but you haven't got money at the end of the year to show for it, your nest egg shouldn't suffer. I think the more that we can make artists financially secure the more that we can support their independence.

Patricia K: Thank you. Mitch Fifield?

Mitch Fifield: Thanks Liza. The Australia Council is and should remain the funding vehicle for individual artists. It's important that remain at arm's length from the government. It's also important that the tax system recognizes the sometimes lumpy earnings of individual artists and it does that through allowing and averaging of tax over four years.

[00:39:00] I think one of the really important things that government can do is make sure that we have an economy that is strong and growing because an economy that's strong and growing means that there will be individuals and corporates, and philanthropists who are in a better position to purchase artworks to support individual artists. The stronger the economy is the better it is, not just for the nation as a whole, but for the arts but, also, individual artists, too.

Patricia K: Mark Dreyfus?

Mark Dreyfus: I'm forced a comment on the incoherence of that last answer from Senator Fifield. We've been getting a lot of trickle-down economics generally from Mr. Turnbull, but that was trickle down to the arts and it's symptomatic of a government that doesn't have a policy. They went to the last election without an arts policy. They're still here. Senator Fifield is still here before you without a policy, two years and nine months into the life of this government. I find that extraordinary.

[00:40:00] To your question, Liza, we value diversity and we value the contribution that is made by independent artists and by individual artists. For the life of me, I can't understand why this government's ministerial slush fund excludes grants to individual artists, but it does. There has been no coherent explanation of it, nor has there been a coherent explanation of the way in which this ministerial slush fund now called "Catalyst" is meant to interact with the Australia Council.

One of the consequences of the cuts to the Australia Council has been a diminution of money available to individual and independent artists. Art Start, for example, vanished because of the cuts to the Australia Council. We are very conscious of the need to fund individual and independent artists. Brett Dean told a very good story when he was given an award at the Australia Council Awards this year referring to the money that started his career in the same discipline as you, Liza.

I remain conscious at all times of the need to fund people, particularly at the outset of their careers, but as individuals and as independent artists.

[00:41:00]

Patricia K: Our next question comes from Neil Armfield on strategy and policy.

Neil Armfield: Thanks. I'm, along with my colleague Rachael Healey, the artistic director of the Adelaide Festival of the Arts. Government investment in arts and culture should be based on a clear statement about the value of the arts for all Australians underpinned by evidence-based policies and research. 2,719 artists and art experts agreed on this in their submissions to the recent senate enquiry. What commitments will you make to rigorous industry consultation and research and the development and implementation of a national arts policy?

Patricia K: Thank you. We'll start this time around with Mitch Fifield.

[00:42:00] Mitch Fifield: Thanks Neil. Well, the Australia Council is the government's principle advisory body on the arts and it does have a significant search capacity so I think that's important to tap into. I got to say I'm a little weary about government dictating from on high the direction that the arts should go to and let me just take ... Let me just give an example from my previous portfolio of disability where a sector, which was as disparate and diverse as the arts are came together, spoke with one voice, said to government this is our vision. This is the vision of our sector. We want a national disability insurance scheme.

They worked on a cross-party basis to bring about support for the common vision.

[00:43:00] Now, I think that there are some lessons that this sector can learn from the disability sector in terms of how to come together, how to work on a common vision. Obviously, government needs to be a partner in that, but it's something that needs to be collaborative between government and the sector, but I really want to see the sector drive the vision.

Patricia K: Thank you. Mark Dreyfus, I think you can go next.

Mark Dreyfus: Thanks very much for the question Neil. Creative Australia was the product itself of two years of rigorous consultation and planning. It's a national cultural policy. I've spent the last two years and nine months consulting with as many people as I possibly could across the arts community. If I am fortunate enough to become arts minister, I'm going to continue to do that because I think that consultation matters. When the sector called for an inquiry by the senate in response to the dreadful cuts that this coalition government has inflicted, I pay tribute to Tamara Winikoff for coming up with the idea of a senate inquiry, she and others.

[00:44:00] I was very happy to champion that idea and my senate colleagues together with Adam's senate colleagues took that forward and we had a senate inquiry. That senate inquiry with the 2,700 and you had the right number, 19 submissions. It was a fantastic process. It was almost a silver lining in the cloud to see the way in which the arts community rallied, did not turn on itself, but rather rallied and made the case for government funding for the arts.

It produced as a marvelous first recommendation that the government should have an arts policy, which I thought was pretty striking that a senate inquiry would actually recommend that the government had an arts policy. We need to get on with restoration and repair. I hope I've made our message clear that that's what we propose to do if we get into government.

Patricia K: Adam Bandt?

[00:45:00] Adam Bandt: As I alluded to before, I think we need to establish a national voice for the arts that's independent of government and it's cross sectoral, but that's resourced by government so that the thinking work about where the arts should be going is there and able to be provided to government and political parties. One of the things that we have learned about the Australia Council is over the last couple of years is the government is quite prepared to put them in a difficult position of cutting their funding without even notifying them so that they find out about it when everyone else does.

I think that's put them in an invidious position and so I think without saying the Australia Council needs to remain a preeminent independent body, but on the policy front I think it would be great that we have a resourced cross-sectoral body that's able to advise. In terms of broader questions about strategic vision, one of the things that hasn't been mentioned but I think is particularly insidious about the catalyst method of funding is that not only can't individual artists apply, but you

need to have matching private funding.

[00:46:00] Now, that is a struggle for many small organizations. There are many big organizations that have fundraising departments that are bigger than whole small organizations put together and it makes it very difficult for them to compete and that's another reason that the Catalyst has got to go. Lastly, something that I've mentioned before. I think one of the big challenges that we see in play in the United States is around digitization. We see it attempted to be resolved through litigation at the moment, Google Books case and the like.

I'd rather us come up with a policy that suites the art sector rather than resolve it in the courts.

Patricia K: Okay. Our next question comes from ... There you are. Evelyn Richardson and it's on the topic. I think you've heard this one before, jobs and growth.

Evelyn R: Evelyn Richardson Chief Executive of Live Performance Australia, the national peak body for more than 400 producers, performing arts companies, and venues across the country. My question is: Jobs and growth has been a key talking point of the election campaign. We now learn from the ABS that there has been a loss of 16,000 jobs in the arts and recreation sectors over the past 12 months. 2,000 of these are creative and performing arts jobs. We've seen investment and innovation plans for other industries.

[00:47:00]

What are your top three priorities to not only repair the damage, but grow the industry with bold ambition?

Patricia K: Thank you for the question. Adam Bandt?

Adam Bandt: Well, restoring the cuts and investing another \$270 million into the art sector would go a long way to do it. That's effectively what we have announced and will have further things to say about how we would like to expand tax offsets to insure that it's not just the likes of Gina Reinhardt that get \$2 billion a year so that they can buy cheap petrol, but that we actually invest scarce government money into areas that are going to create jobs. I think when we get to the point in Australia where a job as a director is treated as importantly as a job as a lawyer, then I think we'll have done well.

[00:48:00] It should be and it is. We need to have government policy that reflects that. I'd like to invest a small, but a significant amount of money \$5 million into innovative and experimental arts in particular. I'm a big believer in STEM, science, technology, engineering, and math. As a science spokesperson, I'm a big believer in that. I'd like us to expand STEM to STEAM and to understand the role of arts in innovation.

Innovation is not just about developing a new gadget. It's about developing new ways of thinking. That's got to be a role that the arts plays and we should support them. Thirdly, valuing individual artists in the way that I've said by making sure they

get paid for their work.

Patricia K: Thank you. Mitch Fifield?

Mitch Fifield: Thanks Evelyn. I'm going to say economic growth and I know Mark thinks that it's a quaint idea, but I don't accept that good economic policy and good social policy or good arts policy are alternatives or that they're in competition. In order to sustain a good economic policy and a good arts policy you need a good economic policy, Mark. Economic growth is one of the things that does help every sector, including the arts so you can scoff at it, but it's a fact. That's the first thing. The second thing is innovation. I completely agree with Adam.

[00:49:00]

I think part of looking at bringing the creative industries and the arts together as part of innovation agenda is putting an A in STEM for STEAM. I think there are some really good things that can happen there together. Finally, just to make an observation you mentioned that the 16,000 jobs that have been lost. The ABS has a very broad category when it comes to this sector. It includes gambling and, also, recreational activities, but that reduction pretty much matches the shifts in economic growth. I just make that observation.

Patricia K: Thank you.

[00:50:00]

Mitch Fifield: Which is the reason why growth is so important.

Patricia K: There was that line in that answer. I completely agree with Adam, which I think should be the headline. How different your general views are on many things and, of course, Mark Dreyfus.

Mark Dreyfus: Thanks very much, Patricia, and thanks Evelyn for your really excellent question. Your organization Live Performance Australia shows us with its 400 members spread right across a range of different disciplines just what broad employment there is in the arts. Some 230,000 Australians are employed in arts and culture. It's almost as many as in the mining industry and governments should all pay attention to that.

[00:51:00]

The question included the Liberal Party's slogan "Jobs and Growth," which of course is a three-word slogan of the kind that the current prime minister decried on the day that he took the leadership of the Liberal Party. He said he wasn't going to use three-word slogans. I'd invite and I think Mitch is willfully missing my point. The answer of the current arts minister to specific questions about what is the arts policy of this government is to start talking in vague generalities about economic growth.

It's not etiquette and it's not a proper answer to what is your arts policy or what are you going to do. We've had fine words from the arts minister, but those fine words which we heard from the previous failed and sacked arts minister have not



been matched by actions from this government over the last two years and nine months. Jobs and growth, I'd invite all of you to contemplate. When was the last time you heard a political part that actually advocated unemployment and recession? It's not going to happen.

Patricia K: Okay. Thank you. Our next question comes from Jo Dunbar. The question is around the Australia Council.

[00:52:00]

Jo Dunbar: Hello. Hi. My name is Jo Dunbar. I am an independent Deaf Theater director and a performer. I am also [partly 00:52:05] deaf. I would like to just take a moment to thank my interpreters for being with me today and allowing me to participate in this important discussion. I am here today because I work across the small and medium art sector [?]00:52:26] Art Center and Art [?]00:52:29] Victoria. I am here because I strongly believe the independent and small to medium arts drive donation/creative innovation.

[00:53:00]

Across nearly 50 years, the Australian Council has developed both sophisticated and sustainable ways to foster that equality. As with all industry, the ability of the [?]00:52:53], but the recent destruction has had a huge impact. My question to you is this: Would you commit to restoring not only funding, but at least \$75 million per year but, also, will you commit to the current Australia Council's key role as national arts funding and advisory body, including the exceptional expert independent peer assessment process?

Patricia K: Thanks for the question, Jo. I think I'll begin with Mitch Fifield.

Mitch Fifield:

No. Thanks for the question. Well, the Australia Council remains expert. The Australia Council remains independent. The Australia Council continues to employ peer assessment so that's a good thing. You made reference to the money that was transferred from the Australia Council to the Ministry of the Arts.

[00:54:00]

There was \$105 million that was transferred across to the Ministry. About 25 million of that was money that attached to visions and festival programs, which had previously been with the Minister of the Arts. There wasn't too much angst about the transfer of that responsibility.

There was because those functions remaining intact. Essentially, what we are talking about is \$80 million which was initially allocated to the national program for the excellence in the arts. When I became minister, I talked to a lot of people in the sector and I thought there needed to be a rebalancing so I returned \$32 million to the Australia Council and we changed the focus of the NPA, and changed it to that a program called "Catalyst."

[00:55:00]

In essence, it's \$12 a year that is in discussion. I don't claim that we have achieved perfection in arts administration. I am open to adjusting and refining the program and arrangements. Happy to keep the dialogue open over the sector.

Patricia K: Thank you. Mark Dreyfus?

Mark Dreyfus: It's all very well for Senator Fifield to say that the Australian Council remains expert, independent, and peer assist. Unfortunately, it remains without adequate funds to perform its functions. I've got to say that this coalition government has treated the Australia Council with complete disrespect. I'd start with the failed arts minister attending the launching of the new strategic objectives of the Australia Council in 2014. He apparently supported those strategic objectives.

[00:56:00] He apparently supported the new direction of the Australia Council, but as his actions speak a great deal louder than any of the fine words he uttered or any of the fine words that Senator Fifield is uttering because in the 2015 budget he ripped \$105 million away from the Australia Council. The Australia Council has had to abandon its six-year funding model, which it had been working on for the last two to three years. Our policy is very clear. I can, Jo, give you the direct commitment that you seek and more.

You were seeking a commitment of \$75 million a year. We give a commitment to ... Sorry. It's \$75 million a year, but we're not giving a commitment yet to \$75 million a year extra. We are giving a commitment as a down payment, if you like, of \$20 million a year extra plus a return of the unspent money from Catalyst. We think that we've got to start on the repair job that is needed in government. I'm going to continue to consult to see how it is that we can continue to strengthen the role of the Australia Council, but we are absolutely appreciative of its importance.

We legislated for the Australia Council in the Whitlam Government 40 years ago. We have maintained our commitment to it ever since.

Patricia K: Thank you. Adam Bandt?

Adam Bandt: Yes Jo. We would absolutely restore the funding. Yes. We would increase it by \$218 million over four years. I think you'll find that's a touch under 75, but pretty close. Yes. We would find money to restore the Art Start Program. I'm sorry, but the Minister's response just displays a complete lack of understanding of the damage done by the cuts. To suggest that somehow there is only a \$12 million difference now is completely wrong. Those cuts landed without any notice, without any review saying there was anything wrong, how the Australia Council was doing its job.

[00:58:00] They came just as the six-year grants were about to be rolled out. As a result, people's planning right across the country was thrown into turmoil and now what we've got is a situation where we've got shorter length grants, and we've got service organizations and peak organizations finding themselves unfunded. We've got a number of small and medium organizations who get no money at all. The sector crying out saying, "Well, where are we going to next?" It's not \$12 million. It's been devastation. It's been decimation. People feel uncertain. We need to restore the funding and get it to the point where no government ever again feels

that they're going to touch the independence of the Australia Council.

Patricia K: The next question comes from Georgie Meagher and the topic is young and emerging artists.

Georgie M: Hi. I'm Georgie Meagher, Artistic Director and CEO of Next Wave. We are an organization that supports young and emerging artists. We've been described by Australia Council's CEO as the leading contemporary arts festival for emerging artists in the country. We recently had our organizational funding completely cut by the Australia Council. Young artists, emerging artists, and emerging art forms are a critical and vibrant component of our art ecology. The past two years have been devastating in terms of programs and investment in young and emerging arts.

[00:59:00] How will you invest with urgency and vision so that Australian arts and culture has a future?

Patricia K: Thank you. Mark Dreyfus?

Mark Dreyfus: Thanks very much, Georgie. It's a really good question. I'd have to say we are interested in restoring not just funding not just the role of the Australia Council and its independence, but predictability in the art sector. We've had an object lesson in the past three years of what happens when you've got a government that's prepared to act without consulting, when you've got a government that's prepared to act by stealth and by surprise that completely tears up the landscape.

[01:00:00] That's why we're all here concerned or most people here are concerned. That's why we got 2,719 submissions to the Senate inquiry into the cuts. It's because I think most people in the arts community and those who love arts in this country can't remember a period where there has been as much damage inflicted in a shorter time. One of the things we are interested in doing deeply is restoring predictability so that organizations like yours don't out of the blue have their funding cut.

Of course, I attribute no blame whatsoever to the Australia Council, which is as much a victim of this government's cuts as the arts organizations that have lost their funding. Something has to give when you take away 28% of the discretionary funding of the Australia Council. I, for the life of me, never understood why there was a quarantining of the major performing arts groups' funding. Why was it the case that there was to be no damage to them, but damage inflicted on every other part of the art sector? Sorry.

Patricia K: You've run out of time.

Mark Dreyfus: I know, but it's not to be taken as any lack of support for the majors. I'm just querying the way this government supports it.

Patricia K: Okay, trying to keep fair here. Mitch Fifield?

[01:01:00]

Mitch Fifield:

Thanks for that. We recognize that the future of the arts, the young people that you work with. There is support, obviously, through the National Training Institutions, creative partnerships to simply work with their match program that seeks to support and mentor new and emerging artists. In terms of the Australia Council and its support, there used to be as you've been aware tens and tens of specific categories, which included some youth categories. Part of the Australia Council's change in approach, part of their strategy, their corporate planning was the removal of some of those categories.

[01:02:00]

It's a point that's been made to me by people such as Daniel Potter, who you would know well. This is an area that I do want to take a look at that I do want to sit down and talk to the youth art sector about what they think they need to insure that we have the great talent of the future sustained and trained.

Patricia K:

Thank you. Adam Bandt?

Adam Bandt:

Let's find the money to restart Art Start. That would be very important. By increasing funding in particular for the Australia Council for small and medium organizations and individual artists, we think that is going to go a long way to making more money available for younger artists. Something I think is important to talk about is the financial situation and financial viability of being a young artist and most young artists will have a mixture of probably small amounts of money that they get from their creative practice some more than others, a bit of time doing casual work outside.

[01:03:00]

That plus some unemployment benefits. Now, what we've seen over the years is the mutual obligation requirements imposed by Centerlink becoming more and more onerous, requirements to apply for jobs, attend training sessions and the like. You can attend volunteer. You can do some volunteer work and have that count towards your mutual obligation requirements. We want to change the rules so that work that is going to make you more employable in the future as an artist that has a public benefit component counts towards your Centerlink obligation.

Perhaps putting on a performance for free or exhibiting your work somewhere if it's part of rehearsing, increasing your skills, and it has a public component, let that count towards Centerlink so that people can get on with perfecting their arts instead of going and applying for jobs that in many cases just aren't there.

Patricia K:

Thank you. The next question is actually going to be asked by me, but it's not my question. Although, I do think it's a very interesting question. It's a question from Henry Boston who is the executive director of the WA Chamber of Arts and Culture. The question is this: Australian audiences have made arts and culture a \$50 billion industry, including artists and audiences from regions and remote locations very far from our big cities. What will you do to make sure that participation in arts and culture is fairly distributed across the nation and across all regions? We'll start with

[01:04:00]

Mitch Fifield.

Mitch Fifield: Thanks for that. This is something that I've spoken to Henry about. The Australia Council Henry has the view that the funding isn't allocated in proportion to population in each jurisdiction. Now, sometimes that can be a function of the number of applications that come from a particular jurisdiction and I know the Australia Council are working with organizations in those jurisdictions that are a bit underdone for funding to help them put applications in so that that situation can be addressed.

[01:05:00] Henry has also raised it with me in terms of some of the programs in my own portfolio, including Catalyst, and I'm happy to look at ways of insuring that there is a more even distribution between the various jurisdictions, but I should just point out Henry also raises the issue of regional allocation. 37% of Catalyst grants have gone to regional areas and just picking up Mark's point on Catalyst supposedly being a Ministerial slush fund, I should point out that they're a panel of assessors who make recommendations in relation to which application.

I have accepted their recommendations on every occasion, no Ministerial discretion has been exercised, and Mark 52% of Catalyst grants have gone to Labor Seats, 32% to coalition seats and, Adam, 10% to Green Seats. Yours is the only Green Seat so anyway, I think those stats tell a story that it's not for purposes of politics.

Patricia K: The electorate of Melbourne is clearly disproportionately represented in the arts grants there. All right, Mark Dreyfus.

Mark Dreyfus: [01:06:00] Henry Boston is from a particularly interesting organization the WA Chamber of Arts and Culture, which is not really replicated in any other state. It's a really interesting model, but it's an organization that works right across the state of Western Australia. I had the pleasure of meeting and talking to Henry just last week in Perth. The concern that he is expressing that there should be support from the commonwealth government for regional art practice for community groups, for small companies, right across Australia, not just in the capital cities, is a concern that we in the Labor Party share.

[01:07:00] That's why we made a commitment last Saturday when the leader of the opposition Bill Shorten announced our national art policy that we take to this election that there will almost be a doubling of the regional arts fund, which has spent some \$9.3 million over the last four years. We are proposing that it should have in addition another \$8 million over the next four years. It's symptomatic representative of the approach that we take. We are not about ripping up existing arrangements.

We are about building on existing arrangements that work. The regional arts fund has been in existence since 2001 and we know it works. We know it works because over the last four years alone when it spent \$9.3 million it's managed to harness

another \$17 million in investment from local government, from the state government, from the philanthropic and corporate sector in partnership and collaboration.

Patricia K: Thank you. Adam Bandt?

Adam Bandt: One of the things that came through pretty clearly in the Senate inquiries that's it's the small or medium organizations that are often working in regional and rural areas that actually reach out to more of the Australia population than perhaps the majors might. Likewise, I've been so impressed with the way that the sector has remained unified.

[01:08:00] Having said that, I'd love to see a graph of dollar subsidy per person that actually gets to experience an art form that goes to the majors versus that goes to the small and medium-size companies because I suspect that the audience reaching regional and rural areas is bigger amongst small and medium companies. We would propose as the Greens, taking something else that [Playing 01:08:11] Australia, the Regional Arts Touring Fund and increasing it by \$2 million a year until it reaches an annual budget of \$10 million.

We think that would go a long way to supporting that. There is one idea that was actually I want to acknowledge the Arts Party who suggested this and we think it's a good idea is that in the same way that we have a national science week, let's have a national arts week that's funded with small support by the government, but that puts arts on the same footing as science and sport in the cultural life of this country and if we did that with a special emphasis on regional and rural areas as well, I think we go a long way to supporting in a sustained way arts in regional Australia.

[01:09:00]

Patricia K: Thank you. Our next question actually comes from Libby Baulch on artist rights. Thanks Libby.

Libby Baulch: Hello. I'm Libby Baulch from the copyright agency. Australia's copyright system is in many respects world leading. It has evolved over time to encompass new technologies and new ways of making and sharing creative expression, but recent recommendations would significantly reduce the rights of artists. What commitment can you make to insure that Australia's copyright system entitles Australia's creators to be fairly paid for the use of their work by others?

Patricia K: Mark Dreyfus.

Mark Dreyfus: I'd start by recalling that in government in our last six years in government we established the artist resale royalty, which has produced just by way of example some \$3 million to date for indigenous artists, but your question is, of course, directed at the current productivity commission inquiry into copyright building on the Harper Review. Both of which so far the productivity commission in draft for only, but the Harper Review directly recommended the repeal of the territorial

[01:10:00]

copyright or parallel import restrictions regime, which Labor legislated for in 1990.

I recall also something else from our last term of government. We rejected an attempt by the productivity commission in 2009 to repeal the territorial copyright regime and as Bill Shorten said in his arts policy launch speech last Saturday, we will treat with tremendous caution any suggestion that the current regime which has created a flourishing Australian publishing industry. We have the 14th largest publishing industry in the world. We all treat with extreme caution suggestions that it should be abolished.

[01:11:00] I think of a quote from something Richard Flannigan said recently in this very context. If you care at all about books, don't vote Liberal at this election. If you care at all about what books mean, don't vote Liberal. If you value how books and enrich lives, don't vote Liberal. If you think Australian books matter to an Australian society, don't vote Liberal. That's Richard Flannigan.

Patricia K: Okay. Adam Bandt?

Adam Bandt: On parallel imports, we don't support the changes that have been proposed and at some point along the way you used the word protect. "How do we protect artists' rights and how do we protect the industry?" At some point along the way, protection became a dirty word. I don't think it is. I think it's okay to say we want to protect what's good about this country. Specifically about that, I noticed that Mark didn't address the question of fair use and what will happen with respect to the productivity commission's recommendations.

[01:12:00] I think this is something we have to get out in front of so that it doesn't become the subject of litigation and the real question has to be how do we insure people are fairly remunerated? For me, it's a question of fair pay rather than fair use. If that's our question, then we can approach the subsidiary questions of how do we deal with digitization with the fact that people's works can be reproduced easily, workout whether we need any changes to our existing laws to forestall the kind of litigation that we've seen overseas.

I would urge. I think there is two camps developing here; one that's just this unequivocally pro-U.S.-style approach and there is another that's saying, "We've just got to maintain existing settings and everything will be fine. If only we prosecuted more people for breaches of copyright, it would be fine. I think we've got to collectively work out how to get in front of that because, otherwise, Google is going to win. I want to make sure that Google doesn't win that the artists win.

Patricia K: Thank you. Next question is-

Mitch Fifield: Oh, Patricia.

Patricia K: Oh, did I forget you?

Mitch Fifield: Yeah. You did.

Patricia K: How did I do ... How did I do that, Mitch Fifield?

[01:13:00]

Mitch Fifield: I know. Your question really goes to two points; one is PAR, which I'll come to in a moment, but the first I think is the productivity commission's draft report into intellectual property flagged an issue that related to the length of time the copyright was in place. At the moment, it's seven years beyond death. They floated the idea of maybe 15 to 20 years after the creation of the work. I put out a statement a couple of weeks ago to say that I thought that the current timeframe is appropriate and that will be maintained under us in government.

[01:14:00] I also thought that some of the language used in the productivity commission report about the sector was to, put it politely, pretty ordinary. On that front, there is clarity as to what we will do. In relation to PAR, Max Wright, the Harper Review which looked at competition policy and abroad had 54 recommendations. One of them related to that PAR. We said in response that we would seek to remove that, but that we haven't specified a timeframe. We want to consult with the sector and we would look at transitional arrangements.

I do point out that in Bill Shorten's political statement in relation to PAR they didn't say at any stage they weren't going to get rid of it. They just said they would approach it cautiously so be careful of the language that people use.

Patricia K: Thank you very much. Now, I will come to the next question. David Pledger will ask a question on international arts.

David Pledger: Hi, David Pledger. I'm an independent artist. I'm filling in for Lisa Garand who can't be here today. She is in rehearsal and she is a very excellent Australian choreographer and we're both covered by the following statistic: One in three Australian artists work internationally. Beyond touring and export, what support will you give to practice development? Which we know develops lasting international relationships, including meaningful international exchange.

[01:15:00]

Patricia K: I'm going to start with Mitch Fifield in an act of showing that [?]01:15:09].

Mitch Fifield: Act of contrition. No. Thanks Patricia and we should acknowledge Lucy Garand's receipt of an Australia Council award and, also, that with North Dance or Dance North I should say a partnership that Lucy Garand is embarking upon has received some government funding so that's good news. You're right. There is significant support for touring. That's important because it's through touring that some of those relationships can be established in the first place, which then need to be built upon.

Now, the Australian Council has some residencies which go to support that but, ultimately, I think it's the quality of those individual relationships that the key



[01:16:00] figures in organizations in Australia have with those overseas that form the basis of those relationships and that you point out the importance of practice development. Yeah. I'm very keen. I'm sure Lucy has some good ideas about how that can be best supported.

Patricia K: Adam Bandt?

Adam Bandt: One of the concerns about the changes in the first budget, the Abbott Government budget was not only taking money out and putting it towards Catalyst, but that also some money found its way back to the department and it become clear that the government was going to start treating the question of internationality of arts on the basis of what it felt was in Australia's diplomatic or economic interests rather than what's in the best interest of the artistic companies themselves.

[01:17:00] The places that those companies may want to develop audiences might not be the places that Australia the country that Australia is trying to lobby for a seat on the UN Security Council. They might be somewhere completely different. Restoring funding to the Australia Council would we hope go a long way to making sure that those exchanges become a permanent feature and, hopefully, a greater feature of the landscape. I do think touring is important. We'd like to see funding to tourism Australia increased so that it's there as part of that approach.

Also, we'd remove the in Australia exemption currently at the moment so that tax deductibility status would apply to some of the other touring that's done by companies and I think that would go some way towards it as well.

Patricia K: Mark Dreyfus.

Mark Dreyfus: Thanks very much, Patricia. Australian artists, Australian musicians, all kinds of Australian artists have always traveled overseas. Both my parents traveled overseas in their 50's; my father to improve his bassoon, my mother to improve her flute playing. I expect that that practice of Australian artists of all kinds of traveling overseas will continue. It's simply a product of us being a long way away from the rest of the world, but we now live in the digital age. It provides an opportunity for us to project Australian culture.

[01:18:00]

It's a real disruption. It is about to come here in the art sector. It allows us to project and we need to recognize this. It's not just about funding. Although, funding matters. The more funding that we have promised to the Australia Council will assist in the process. I don't agree with Mr. Bent that a cultural diplomacy as it's sometimes been called should be dismissed. I think it's actually a valuable way of projecting our country to the rest of the world. I like the title of the Australia Council's strategic policy document "A Culturally Ambitious Nation."

That's what we should be, but it's not just for ourselves. It's to be culturally ambitious and to project that everywhere in the world. I am for the commonwealth government supporting outreach. I'm for the commonwealth government

[01:19:00] supporting touring. I am for the commonwealth government supporting ways in which individual artists can travel. I'd refer again to the anecdote I told about Brett Dean who attributes his career as a composer to early funding he got then as a viola player to go and live in Berlin.

Patricia K: Thank you. Our next question comes from Kate Atkinson on screen and games.

Kate A: Yeah. Hi. I'm an actor, but I'm asking this question on behalf of the screen culture and games industry, which have taken significant hits over the past two years. What is your plan to drive growth across these creative industries? Including tax incentives, broad public investment as well as private investment.

Patricia K: We'll start with Adam Bandt.

Adam Bandt: The Greens established the video games inquiry in the Senate to precisely look at these issues and recommendation number one out of that was to reintroduce a funding scheme based on the former government's Australian Interactive Games Fund. I think it's important for people to recognize that a lot of the skills that people have might ... You talk about screen and games because a lot of the skills are interchangeable and people need to realize that that's increasingly a part of a way people are making their livings individuals and businesses.

[01:20:00]

Firstly, restore that funding. Secondly, I think this is an area where we should look at exploring tax offsets. I think the film tax offset and the producer tax offset there is a case for permanently increasing those. I guess lastly, I would say that and this is perhaps one where I might agree with Mark, I think we probably need a proper NBN. I think a proper NBN would go a long way to insuring that we had a sustainable industry in this country.

Patricia K: Mitch Fifield.

Mitch Fifield: I'll have start on the NBN as Coms Minister, but it will actually be built six to eight years sooner than would have been the case under our predecessors and of \$30 billion less cost for the record, but we do make some significant commitments to the screen industry, the location offset. There is the producer offset. There is the PDV offset. There is the Screen Australia direct investment into film and one of the great things about that direct investment is that that direct investment is that leverages and encourages private investment into film as well.

[01:21:00]

One of the developments which I think we all appreciate and have noticed is that the distinctions between various screen types blurring between big screen, TV, and also gaming.

The production values are increasing in gaming and TV so there is a blurring, and as I say, one of the things that I'm keen to do is to look at innovation in the arts and I think that this area of the range of supports that we provide to the screen sector is something that should have included and something that we should look at to see

[01:22:00] if those arrangements are fit for purpose for the way that technology is developing and consumers are consuming.

Patricia K: Finally, Mark Dreyfus.

Mark Dreyfus: Thanks Patricia. The significant cuts that you spoke of in the question that's an understatement. We've had \$40 million cut from screen Australia. The interactive games fund was abolished. That's \$20 million just right there and you'll remember Tony Abbott's election eve announcement of no cuts to the ABC. What a joke. We have announced what we hope are commitments that will set us on the path to restoring where our screen industries need to be.

[01:23:00] The announcement that we've made for \$60 million in new money for the ABC to fund local TV production we hope will lead to another flowering of high end TV production such as that we've seen over the last few years; shows like "Rake" and "Janet King," and "The Code," Anzac Girls," most recently "Clever Man" or "A Beautiful Lie." There is a whole range of series that are telling Australian stories not just here, but overseas. We will have more to say in this election campaign about film and screen industries.

The Minister has mentioned the location offset, the producer offset. They, of course, have been in place for some years and, of course, they have dropped well below international comparisons. Finally, I'd say we support the idea of commonwealth government money going to bring blockbuster film projects to Australia. You didn't hear a word of criticism from us at the giving of money to the Alien prequel to the sequel I think it is being made here in Australia or another Thor movie being made here in Australia in government.

[01:24:00] We gave \$22 million to the Disney studio, which led to the making of "Pirates of the Caribbean 5" on the Gold Coast, which spent more than \$100 million in Australia and employed more than 1,000 Australians over more than a year. That's what those big productions can do for us and support the screen industries as a whole. What we do oppose is funding bringing blockbusters to Australia by making cuts elsewhere, including cruelly the giving of the proceeds of the sale of the Screen Australia Studio in Lane Cove over to funding one of those blockbusters to come to Australia.

It's no way to approach funding of the screen industries. Thank you.

Patricia K: Thank you, Mark Dreyfus. Now, we've come to the end of all the formal questions and I've made one observation. You've all stuck to time. We are doing exceedingly well with time so I'm going to start having a stopwatch at all of our interviews because you're never as good on the radio time, which always gets me into trouble and I don't get my questions in. Everyone else got their questions in today so I think it's fantastic. I've been asked to give a brief and it's going to be very brief because I'd like to hear a bit more flesh from both of you to flesh out some of your ideas for the three of you, rather.

[01:25:00]

It's a tripartisan debate, unusually. Often they are just the two major parties. We've heard the vision from the Greens, of course. The government is fighting to be reelected and, also, from the ALP. I think some of the standouts for me were the ALP talking about the trust for the Australia Council and the reinvestment in money in the Australia Council about \$20 million a year, you said Mark Dreyfus, and the commitments there which, of course, were unveiled on Saturday at the Mold House.

[01:26:00] For the Greens, I think this idea that you've been talking about around the mutual obligation system with the unemployment benefits changing to really include artists who do work, but are excluded in that system. I know many people how, for a long time and I have reported in this area for a long time. I've talked about the unfairness around that, very interesting around that. Minister, you mentioned adjusting and refining. I've written down the words.

You know that tension and, clearly, we've heard there has been a few sounds at different times throughout this debate around Catalyst, which you know is a very contentious policy idea. You did give some hope, I think.

Just a tinsy bit; that's how I read into it, around listening to the sector, having more consultation, and adjusting and refining your policies around the funding, and really restoring the strength and the independence of the Australia Council and, of course, your commentary around not wanting to dictate to artists and the arts community what they should be doing, but actually really having government at arm's length. They're the kind of points that stood out to me if I was writing a story on this.

[01:27:00] I want to invite you all now and you can take more than one minute. We are being very cruel I think. One minute, what can you do in one minute? You can take a couple of minutes, but to address this. I think we'll start with Mitch Fifield.

Mitch Fifield: Sure.

Patricia K: How will the Australian people measure your government's success in the arts in one year's time?

Mitch Fifield: Thanks Patricia. Given we've got more than one minute, I might just pick up on something that ...

Patricia K: About three.

Mitch Fifield: Thank you. Something that Mark touched on referring to the funding for the Aliens sequel or prequel "Prometheus." When I took that proposition to Cabinet for that funding, I said in the Cabinet, "Look. I really need to declare a conflict of interest here because in the "Prometheus" movie there was a character called "Fifield," and Christopher Pine looked across the table at me and said, "Yes, but he died."

Anyway, how do I hope that things will be judged in a year's time?

[01:28:00] Ultimately, it will be the people in this room and the people beyond this room who form a judgment as to the success or otherwise. Each individual and each organization will have their own benchmarks and their own things that are important to them, but what I would hope if we are reelected in a year's time, is that we are able to demonstrate that we have a plan to bring the arts and the creative industries to the heart of the innovation agenda so that can be a benchmark that people use to assess should we be reelected.

[01:29:00] Also, I think this may surprise or not, but the issues of 2014. There have been some positive things in terms of how the sector works together that have come out of that. The sector has spoken with a more common voice than it has in the past. The sector has built bridges amongst itself in ways that previously haven't been the case. I think that's an unequivocally good thing. I do genuinely think that there are some good and positive lessons that can be learnt from taking a look at the disability sector and how they put forward a vision.

Yes. Of course, government has policies. Government has outlines. Government determines what are the ways that it will be involved, but I think a critical element is the sector forming a view as to how it thinks the administration of the arts in Australia should be optimized and if I'm privileged to have the opportunity to continue as the arts minister, then I'd really look forward to working with you on that.

Patricia K: [01:30:00] Mitch Fifield, I'm going to abuse my role as chair because that's how I'm trained and bred as a journalist, but I'm going to abuse it for all of you so I'm going to be fair in my abuse of my role because, of course, this is an election campaign. We got to take that very seriously. I just want to follow up with this question only because you know what I'm like. I've been following the Twitter feed. I can't help myself here secretly, not so secretly. A lot of people have critiqued some of the things you've said on the basis that they expected that you'd come and outline some maybe future funding or another direction.

You have robustly articulated the government's existing policy, but we haven't heard necessarily anything new. Should we expect an unveiling of an arts policy or can you give us a hint? Will there be some ... You talk about consulting around Catalyst. What might that look like?

Mitch Fifield: [01:31:00] Well, none of us should be immune or opposed to learning from experience, learning from how things work in practice. It can be one thing to have a program in theory. It can be something different again in practice. Usually, I've found in the various portfolios that I've had, be it aged care or disability that the best ideas usually come from the sector itself rather than from government. When I talk about consulting looking to adjust, looking to change that's what I mean. For those who may have known me in previous incarnations, I think that's been people's experience of me. People can take that at face value.

Patricia K: Mark Dreyfus, you can take your up to three minutes and then I'll come up with a fantastic question for you, too.

Mark Dreyfus: Thanks very much, Patricia. How will the Australian people measure our success, our government's success in the arts in a year's time? I'm hoping we are elected to govern Australia. I think that in a year's time if we are elected, the Australian people will see that that labor government values arts and a cultural life. They will have seen that a Shorten Labor Government has supported the arts and has commenced the repair job, the restoration job that is necessary after the dreadful past three years.

[01:32:00] We might not win this election on arts policy alone, but I can say to you that we understand that arts policy informs the kind of government that we are going to be. It really matters and it will be central to a Shorten Labor Government. It's going to take more than a year to do that repair job, but I think our artists and arts organizations will gain in confidence as we restore an environment of predictability for them and we can put this past three years of chaos and confusion behind us.

The arts are what make us Australian. We understand that the arts are what tell our Australian stories and we understand that. I have to say that there is a reason why we've run to time. It's because the Minister Senator Fifield has had very little to say today.

Patricia K: Well actually, you've all [crosstalk 01:32:53] time.

Mark Dreyfus: Well, sometimes the Minister has gone short, Patricia.

Mitch Fifield: I haven't provided critiques on you. That's the difference.

[01:33:00]

Mark Dreyfus: I'm going to continue to provide the critique on the Minister. We've got an election campaign on.

Patricia K: Let's keep it friendly fellows.

Mark Dreyfus: Patricia Tweeted yesterday ...

Patricia K: I did.

Mark Dreyfus: ... that we might see an announcement from Senator Fifield today with some justification because when Patricia was interviewing Senator Fifield on Monday and asked him the question, "So are we going to get much more of your arts policy?" Senator Fifield said, "All I can say is watch this space." Well, I've been watching this space for two years and nine months and it's empty. There is nothing there. The coalition has provided nothing for Australia in the form of arts policy other than confusion, incoherence, damage, and destructiveness, it's time it was brought to an

end.

It is an election campaign. All of you and everybody listening know what you have to do on July the 2nd. It's put the Liberal Party last, preferably vote Labor first.  
[crosstalk 01:33:54]

Mitch Fifield: You are confirming that you are putting the Greens ahead of the Liberal Party.

[01:34:00]

Mark Dreyfus: That put the Liberal Party last because that will insure that we don't have a continuation ...

Mitch Fifield: That was for the benefit of David Crean.

Mark Dreyfus: ... that we don't have a continuation of the destruction that we've seen over the past three years.

Patricia K: Okay. As much as I ...

Mark Dreyfus: Thanks very much.

Patricia K: ... would love this to turn into a discussion about Green's preferences, one of my favorite conversation pieces as you all probably know. I do have a question for you. Now, Labor cut regional arts by \$8 million. Now you're saying you'll double it, but the figure isn't double. Is it? You're saying 8 million, but given you've cut it you're just restoring what you've cut. You talk about the Liberals and their cuts, but you've actually done that in the past and you're trying to rebadged this funding as a doubling when it clearly isn't.

Mark Dreyfus: The cut that Patricia is talking about it's a fair question. The cut that Patricia is talking about is some considerable time back. I think it's in 2008 and '09 when there was a cut to the regional arts fund from us in government, but there was a very major increase to the Australia Council and I think it's well understood by everyone who understands arts policy and arts funding in Australia that the Australia Council also funds regional art activity.

[01:35:00]

Just because there was a cut to a particular form of funding the regional arts fund then, does not mean that there wasn't actually over the six years of Labor Government a substantial increase in funding to regional arts and culture and an elected Labor Government will insure that there is again a very substantial direct increase to the regional arts fund, but through the Australia Council increases to regional arts funding there as well.

Patricia K: Thank you. Okay. Finally, I'll ask that broad question to you, Adam Bandt. How will the Australian people measure your success? Obviously, you can't form government, but your success in trying to push for your arts ideas in the next Parliament?

Adam Bandt:  
[01:36:00]

Well, everyone needs a voice and the Greens have been the voice of the arts and culture sector in this Parliament, especially as we've taken on and defeated a bad Minister. I feel utterly confident that if we can defeat a bad Minister and get some of the money back, we can defeat a bad government and get all of it back and, perhaps, get a bit more. We will be your voice fighting for an expanded secure, and independent arts and culture sector.

Now, that means expanded, secure, and independent in terms of the amount of money that's given out so that it's understood that it's not government ministers dictating on a whim how money is going to be delivered in the arts, but that is the arm's length peer reviewed process of the Australia Council. It means restoring their funding. It means entrenching a national voice in the arts that is broadly representative across the sector and is able to advise independently about where we should be going next so that we don't have to just react defensively each time the government does a bad thing.

[01:37:00]

In terms of secure and independent, it's also about the life of the artist and making sure that doing arts in Australia, being a writer, engaging in creative endeavors is a way that you are able to sustain yourself and that organizations are able to sustain themselves. I say that yes because it's important to talk about the economic benefit of the arts to society and everyone up here on the panel has, and I'm sure everyone in this room will. We could continue to do so because people's livelihoods depend on it.

[01:38:00]

Also, it's important for us as a society and where we're going that we value this. From the perspective of contribution and creativity, I actually think a musician that creates something actually contributes more to a society than a stock broker who just speculates with other people's creativity and ultimately costs society. I think that critically at a time of dealing with globalization, dealing with digitization, dealing with automation unless you have a creative, intelligent and analytical society that's prepared to take a good look at itself, our economy becomes toxic.

Your economy becomes toxic and we need a thriving, independent creative art sector now more than ever. How will we be judged? Well, I'd like to think first ... I guess three criteria. One is that life as an artist would be easier. It's not going to be all beer and Skittles and you all know that, but that it should be a bit easier and for a very small amount of money we can make life a bit more easier and a bit secure for artists.

Secondly, I would like to think that everyone, if not everyone at least more people around the country, are talking about the arts and that we're talking about the arts in the way that we are talking about science as a way of dealing with the challenges of the 21st Century. Lastly, I guess for me the most successful criteria is that no future government of any political stripe ever wants to touch the arts budget or the Australia Council again. That, to me, would be a mark of success.



[01:39:00]

Patricia K:

Thank you. My question to you, Adam, is you are the only lower house member of Parliament that represents the Greens. Your party cannot form a government in the lower house. It's fairly unlikely that's going to happen unless there is a revolution I suspect, unless you can tell me something about polling I don't know so given that, how will you flex your muscle to make this a priority? Because the Labor Party says they don't want to go into government with you. I know you've said that you would support them to create a coalition government.

They say they won't so how would you influence the process to actually see that any of your policies see the light of day?

Adam Bandt:

Well, one of the things that we have found is that there is no monopoly on good ideas and part of the role of the Greens has been to advocate something that might be seen as incredibly unpopular at the time and then five years later each of the other parties are clamoring to take ownership of it. Marriage equality is a classic example of that. We've had to fight and fight to get it even brought on for a vote and we've had labor and Liberal being split and voting against us on it all. Now, they're clamoring to say, "Oh, we're going to introduce the bill first and we've got the best option."

[01:40:00]

I think that it's that far-sightedness and that innovation that will continue to see us advancing ideas that in a few years' time people will be turning around and pitching for themselves. Great, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Don't mind that, but we had led the agenda in so many ways. Secondly, the most common poll result that's being thrown up at the moment is 50/50. There is every chance that we are heading for another power share in Parliament and the other parties can say what they like before the election.

You can't tell me that when they're in with a sniff of the treasury benches that they're not going to come and want to talk to us. We are in a position where we are running hot in Melbourne. We are running hot at the seat of "Bartman." where Alex Bartel is running a great campaign. In other seats around Inner City Melbourne, and who thought in 2010 that we'd wake up and find that Melbourne got to determine who formed government and the conditions on which they did it.

[01:41:00]

To reference something that the Minister said before, if Melbourne is getting an extra share of the arts money, it's because we got so many creative people here punching above their weight. It's no surprise that Melbourne was the first place to go Greens and I reckon there is every chance that we could make the same impact on the national agenda at this election.

Patricia K:

Thank you very much. I want to thank all three of our speakers and debaters. Thank you to Mark Dreyfus who is the Shadow Arts Minister and the Shadow Attorney General. Thank you to Adam Bandt who is the Greens' MP for Melbourne but, also, the spokesperson for the arts for the Greens. Thank you, Adam. Also, thank you to the Minister Mitch Fifield who is the Minister for Communications and the Minister

[01:42:00] for the Arts for coming along. Thank you, Mitch. I also want to thank the interpreters who have done a fantastic job at making sure ...

Adam Bandt: Yeah.

Patricia K: ... that this is an inclusive event. A special shout out to all the people who are not in the room, who aren't in Melbourne. Of course, artists come from regional areas from diverse cultural backgrounds across this nation. We want to thank everyone who has tuned in, who has participated in what is an excellent online continue as well, and everyone at Federation Square, too. Thank you very much. I've been having an excellent time moderating this and I'd like to hear more from all of you. The next time I'm going to get the stopwatch out. [crosstalk 01:42:46- 01:42:39]

[01:43:00] She is. Esther is now entering. This is not over.

Mark Dreyfus: All right.

Patricia K: Esther has some stuff to say.

Esther A: No.

Adam Bandt: What?

Esther A: Get up.

Patricia K: You are all allowed to leave, but Esther is taking over. Thank you.

Esther A: Patricia Karvelas, ladies and gentlemen, a big round of applause for Patricia Karvelas. Thank you. Oh, my goodness. Thank you so much. I'm going to say some thanks, but I'm also going to ask Rachael Healey and Nicholas Pickard to join me on the stage so that we can have a nice wrap-up discussion while the polys leave the room. I know we haven't had the chance to [crosstalk 01:43:34] all ask some questions, have a chat, so please join me. While they're coming up onto the stage, let's thank ArtsPeak. Let's thank Tamara and Nicole. Let us thank the powerhouses that are these people.

[01:44:00] Let us thank Norm and Sarah from Feral Arts. Please come forward you guys. Norm and Sarah right there so we can congratulate you in person. Come on. Come on. Go and stand there. They are Sarah Monahan and Norm Horton of Feral Arts. All right. Now, this is I'm over here now. Hi. All right. For those who can stick around, please stick around for a bit. Discussion today as we know was a fairly locked format. It was all about getting a range of questions to our politicians.

They could prepare and they could respond, and we had a range of levels of preparation there, which was really fantastic to see. Also, some expected maybe some unexpected things. I'm just going to ask these two a couple of questions then there will be a chance for all of us to be able to respond and have your say as well, but, first of all, please welcome Rachael Healey the co-artistic director of the

[01:45:00] Adelay Festival who has come all the way from Adelay, of course, and all the way from Sidney we have Nicholas Pickard who I'm going get the title on. He is the director of communications ...

Nicolas P: Membership and Stakeholder relations for the copyright agency.

Esther A: Welcome Nicolas. I know that a lot of other people have come from interstate to be here today. Who has come from interstate to be here today? Man, that is a lot of people. Thank you all so much. Wow. All right so we had some expected and maybe some unexpected comments there from Mitch and from Adam, and from Mark. How much of that was expected and how much of that was unexpected, Rachael?

Rachael H: I'm one of those tragics who keep believing it can be better from the current government, one of the poor puppies in this country who believe that Turnbull could be another Keating. Yeah. I just feel like such an idiot now, actually. It was always going to be this way. I just felt that, frankly, the Minister ... I wondered if he had even prepared. It's just all Motherhood. It was so depressing. Promise to consult. I don't know if any of you were at Carriage Works about a year ago when Fifield first became the Minister.

[01:46:00]

He spoke to the small to medium sector. He gave us his mobile phone number.

Esther A: He did, gave it right out.

Rachael H: He did.

Esther A: Yeah. Text him, yeah.

Rachael H: I thought, "Look. The Brandis Debacle is over. Turnbull was in power. Fifield seems like a decent guy." I've texted him and he's promised to get back to me and he hasn't. I just felt really dispirited and disappointed. I feel like an idiot, that I should have known it was going to be like this.

[01:47:00]

Esther A: Rachael, you're a clever lady. You're not an idiot. I reckon if I said, "Who is feeling a bit disappointed that Watch This Space didn't result in policy." Who is feeling a bit disappointed? Numerous non-idiots in the room. Yeah. Look. It would have been fantastic to have seen something really specific from the Minister. That, of course, means that he is going to be rearing to go between now and the election to wow us with the arts. Isn't he, Nick?

Nicolas P: Yes.

Esther A: What are your thoughts listening to all of that?

Nicolas P: Look. I just want to go back and congratulate ArtsPeak, Norm, Sarah on a fantastic

[01:48:00] day today. What we have out of it is two parties with well-formulated arts, an arts platform leading into an election. We've got the arts as an election debate and I think that that's one of the first times in many years that we've got the arts center of what's happening on July 2. Having said that, there was a level of predictability in what was said today, particularly from the government representative, but I must admire the fact that he turned up today and he faced the crowd.

I think that there is some credit for that and he seems in what he was saying that he wants to pick up again and engage with the sector, but look. The proof is in the pudding of what's happened since he took the office, but let's hope that he can take it on if they form government on July 2.

Rachael H: I think the problem ... Look. Without knowing the detail of what happens in the Party Room, the problem is not engaging with the sector. The problem is a failure in Cabinet to make the case and the fact that you would have to make the case to Turnbull who was the only person, remember in the Henson affair, who spoke out when Kevin Rod dissed the work of Bill Henson. It was Turnbull who spoke out. I don't think we were unrealistic to believe that at a very senior level, at the level of the Prime Minister that we would have a supporter of the arts.

[01:49:00]

To be sitting here and hearing people use words like "destruction, the worst environment in living memory" is just I think heartbreaking.

Esther A: Yeah. Look. Certainly no community, no group, no group of artists, no people who created the Australian culture want to be hearing that kind of language. There was a lot of that negative language then of the positive language we had a few statements about art for art's sake, about ... What did you make of some of their opening statements? This going back a whole hour now where they're asked to just let us know a bit about what their vision does. Did we hear some vision there?

[01:50:00]

Rachael H: Yeah. Well, I certainly did from the Greens and from Labor. Vision is great, but it's also relatively easy to come up with a few catch phrases that sound great and I think when you're talking to the arts community it's not really enough just to say art for art's sake. We know the difference between intrinsic and instrumental value. That's fine. What we really want to hear is: How do you make that real? What policy levers are you going to push and pull to turn that into something meaningful? I think we did get that from the Greens and Labor, but I think we just got headline motherhood from Fifield.

Esther A: Yeah. That notion of trickle down as well. There is a great confidence in build the economy and everything else will happen, and there is no need to have a specific arts policy because if we simply take care of a certain economic base, it will trickle like a well-irrigated garden. Do we buy that Nick Pickard?

[01:51:00]

Nicolas P: There was a marked difference between what Labor and the Greens and the Coalition was saying around that. Mitch Fifield talked about the importance of a

strong economy and that supporting the arts; whereas, the reverse, which comes from very much the Labor and Greens side is that the arts is part of the economy and it supports the growth of the economy. I think that is a marked difference that came out today and I think that that's ... It's a big division between the three parties and it reflects in what they had to say today.

Esther A: Now, no doubt you've got a lot to say. One of you I believe already has the microphone. No. You don't. Who has got a question or some kind of comment? Right up the front here we have a radio mike. She can't jump across. You'll need to bring the mike to her. Fantastic. It's now in your hand.

[01:52:00]

Emma B: It's a health and safety risk for me to jump.

Esther A: Exactly. No. We're on it. Don't you worry.

Emma B: Oh, now my phone is ringing. Just hold on while I silence it. I just wanted to say on behalf of the disability sector that I'm really quiet over and really quite disappointed in the constant rhetoric about how we the art sector could learn so much from the disability sector in relation to the NDIS and the way that's been formulated. I'm just really over that because, actually, the arts and disability sector through Arts Access Australia and our members have tried so many times just to get a seat at the table to have a conversation about the national arts and disability strategy in this country.

[01:53:00] Yet, we are being preached to about how we should all learn a great lesson from the NDIS so I think, "Clean up your own house before you start telling us to look elsewhere for these great examples of consultation and sector inclusion." Today is a fantastic example of how the sector has come together, but there have been many others and I think to continually use this as a "get-out-of-jail-free-card" is actually a little bit disingenuous. I just wanted to say that. Thank you.

Esther A: Absolutely. No. Keep that microphone just for a second. Please give the microphone back to Emma just for a second. That's Emma Benson the Executive Director of Arts Access Australia. Can you tell us just while we're all here together where the NDIS is at as far as you are concerned at the moment? Because it's great for us all to know.

Emma B: Well, I think the end ... I'm not in any way being critical of the NDIS. I think the NDIS has an enormous amount of potential for the arts, particularly in relation to the information linkage and capacity building aspect of the scheme, which is not just about people who are NDIS recipients are included in the NDIS model, but I think in terms of the arts and the NDIS there are some questions to be asked in relation to the fee structures, and how they support touring, and creation of artistic work.

[01:54:00]

There is a question about whether the arts really should be separated and have a separate set of guidelines around it rather than being lumped as it always is with sport and recreation. There are a lot of questions still to be answered, but I think

the NDIS generally has great potential. I just wish we'd stop using it as an example of how a sector has come together when, actually, we have some fantastic examples of how our own arts and cultural sector has come together. I do wish that we'd start having some joined-up conversations about the NDIS and the National Arts and Disability strategy.

[01:55:00] I'm really excited that the Ministry for the Arts is finally consulting not only with arts organizations but, also, with individual artists on the National Arts and Disability Strategy and reviewing that across the whole sector. I hope that all of you will take the time to complete their survey, which actually does have some questions about the NDIS and the arts in there. I think that's a great opportunity, too.

Esther A: Brilliant. Thank you, Emma. Who has got another question or comment? I see that sitting just a little bit behind Emma are two members of the arts party and it will be great to give them the mike for a second and let's hear about you and your plans. Yeah, just coming to you now. Anyone who has got a question after that, please just grab Sarah's attention. Rose?

Rose: Thank you very much for that unexpected opportunity. Well, our plans are to stand as a representative voice to speak on behalf of the arts to be informed by the wider arts community at all times, to consult, to be a regular voice for the arts within the legislative processes. It's fantastic to have an extraordinary network of arts, big organizations, in this country, but in 2011 I personally made the decision that the arts needed to get inside the legislative processes of this country and I certainly haven't changed my mind on that fact.

[01:56:00] I strongly encourage people who are curious to know more about the Arts Party to go to [www.artsparty.org](http://www.artsparty.org). All of our policies and candidates are there. At this point in time, we have 19 candidates standing across Australia. We have one in the House of Representatives in Victoria and 3 Senate candidates. Please feel free to make contact with us. We're very happy to hear opinions and advice.

[01:57:00] Esther A: Thank you, Rose. The next question is from ... It is not Tamara. It is just up the back and then it will be Tamara who is up the front. It's you.

Lena Naloose: Me? Oh, okay. Hi. Nice to see you both again.

Esther A: Hello, Lena.

Rachael H: Hi.

Lena Naloose: Hello. I'm Lena Naloose from Cold Tour. I guess I have to ask the question about why cultural diversity wasn't mentioned by any of the politicians today and why that question was left off or that context wasn't given, particularly given the very public debates over the last few years and the very interesting public discourse

around [ArtsPeak 01:57:33]. Why do we even ... Closer to home, the Logies, and the seemingly mono-cultural kind of mainstream arts and how difficult and much more complex it is often for artists from culturally diverse backgrounds to participating number arts and cultural production, and even more so for newly arrived artists and refugee background artists.

[01:58:00]

Esther A:

Guys, I will have a go at that one while the microphone goes to the next person. Thank you, Lena. As you can imagine, it was enormously challenging for the group who put these 10 questions together to put them together, and then we had to risk offending all of our candidates and MPs. I should say that Mark Dreyfus who is still with us in the front there looks like he's Tweeting away or he's taking notes. He's going cultural diversity. Get it in there.

At the great risk of offending our three MPs and saying to them that every response had to be only 90 seconds that we could squeeze in as many questions as we could, there were many industry-specific/policy-specific questions that also didn't make it. It's with apologies that we also didn't have a specific question on cultural diversity. I hope that in Australia in 2016 that is something that, Mark is nodding, would be an essential part of any platform that any candidate puts together for any policy area. Tamara?

[01:59:00]

Tamara Winikof:

I did tell people yesterday about this, but there may be some other people in the room who weren't there. To let people know about the Day of Action and there is a Day of Action being planned on the 17th of June, but actually it's the beginning of two weeks of action leading up to the election. It's being managed rather disparately across a number of different sectors, including theater and the visual arts. For those of you who would like to know more about it and participate in it, you can certainly come to the Nava website.

There will be information there and, also, on the Theater Network's New South Wales website because each of us is trying to coordinate our own sectors, but we are moving towards working together. The point of the Day of Action is to try to get people to actually either fill in a postcard, those postcards are going to be available through the theaters and all the galleries around Australia, and through art schools and through the commercial galleries, and all the great variety of galleries.

[02:00:00]

There will be an electronic postcard. There will be a petition to sign, but probably most importantly the suggestion that's been made is that you make your own little comment or video or photograph with a sign that you then send to the arts politicians to tell them about the fact that we value the arts in Australia and I guess that this is one of the key messages that we are all working on to try to raise the profile of the arts, not only as part of the election debate, but long term so for those of you who are interested in taking action and in being the catalyst ... Sorry. I shouldn't use that word. Being the ...

Esther A: Reclaim it. Bring it back. [inaudible 02:00:48] catalyst.

Tamara Winikof: [02:01:00] Being the spreader of the message, please be involved yourselves and get other people involved because the idea of this campaign is really to show that it's not just arts people who care about the arts. It's all our audiences, the people who participate in making art themselves, and people who recognize the value of the arts as part of everyday life. Please be involved.

Esther A: Fantastic, Tamara. While the microphone is going to the next person, which I believe was ... Are you still after a question? No? Well, excellent. Right in the middle there. While that microphone is going, let's ask Rachael and Nicolas. We've been talking about how there has been, obviously, a lot more focus and impact on the national conversation about the arts and culture in the last little while. How has that helped some of the conversations that you have in your work in advocacy and talking to partners? How has this momentum helped?

Nicolas P: [02:02:00] Just to what Emma said before about the frustration that she expressed around the art sector learning from disability. It's good to reflect because there is an element of policy amnesia that tends to happen. The sector has rallied and engaged with government around the creation of creative Australia and as part of that the reform of the Australia Council looking at private sector support of the arts. The sector has engaged with the Australia Council on a strategic overview and it is expressing with a united voice and a very policy-literate sector more so than a lot of other sectors.

[02:03:00] I think that really reflects in today's event what happens online. I've been overseas for the last three years and watching the sector respond in such a mature way to what was going on with that policy discussion it's been for my mind terrific.

Rachael H: Yeah. I think there are many good things I suppose that have come out of the conversations and about broader public and media engagement with the issues. I guess I think the thing that I worry about when I see the incredible dialogue that happens on social media and in real life about these issues is the extent to which we are engaging with politicians and political advisors outside of the arts portfolio. I really hope that people are talking to their local MPs and engaging across the whole cabinet.

[02:04:00] There was, in fact, a platform paper written about this some years ago by an ex-arts minister who talked about the fact that the moment he stopped being the arts minister no one from the arts community talked about to him anymore. I think that the issue isn't just Fifield and Turnbull. The issue is broader and everyone lives somewhere. There are people that you can contact. I remember when I was 17 I worked in Bob Catley's office. You think a single letter or a phone call won't make a difference. Certainly, one or two offices don't take that much notice, but when there is five or six you start to think something is going on.

It's still within the power of even a small group of people to start rattling the can in



their local areas.

Nicolas P: I totally echo that and to contact regional members, members from across states and territories hold the parties to account. Whoever wins on July 2, hold them to account. That advocacy and that constant conversation that has to be absolutely maintained and expanded beyond what we're doing.

Nicole Baer: [02:05:00] Absolutely. We've got a question right in the middle and then that lady there who is going to put her hand up again is going to grab the mike off you. Yeah. That's good so close on that.

Gary P: Thank you. My name is Gary [Parmana 02:05:05]. I'm a Sidney-based artist and arts worker.

Esther A: Welcome.

Gary P: Thank you. I work for Lena for cultural. I work in local government. I do a couple of other projects like most young art workers. We keep our hands in many different things. I'm sure you meant it well when you said what you said, but I found it really dismissive when you said, "Sorry. We can talk about diversity." It just wasn't top 10 in the list of things, which makes me kind of question my place as an artist and arts worker of color and it makes me wonder what a lot of migrant communities might feel about the arts.

When they go to vote how they would feel essentially voting for White Anglo-Saxon art? Yeah.

Esther A: I'm really sorry that I came ...

Gary P: [crosstalk 02:05:47] to Tweet about this.

Esther A: ... across that way. Yep?

Gary P: [02:06:00] I was going to put "The National White Arts Debate" because there is nothing about culture diversity or my place or my community's place. You can be dismissive of that, but they go to vote, and it's important that we as artists and arts workers win them over and explain to them that art is part of their lives, and they participate in arts. Yeah.

Esther A: You are absolutely right. I could also offer the same apology to all the other questions that weren't asked about ... You're right that it is a central and an unshakeable part of the Australian identity that the migrant culture, the indigenous culture, and the cultural diversity is essential to Australian culture. That was my experience growing up in a migrant family. That was the experience of many of us here whose first language wasn't English who have accessed the arts in very different ways, often counter to what our families would have preferred for us to do.

[02:07:00] Thank you for raising that because the last thing that I would have wanted was to come across as dismissive about something that's very important to me so I apologize. Now, there is another question just ... Yeah.

Brenda H: I was just wanting to ... Brenda Hobson from Belleview. I'm just wanting to add to the point about ...

Esther A: Thank you. That's better.

Brenda H: I was going to add to the point about lobbying local members. The postcard that's coming out through the Inter Network New South Wales will also be in avant cards around the country, avant card placements around the country. We'll be addressed to the audience members local member and the 20 venues around New South Wales who will be distributing them after performances for the two weeks leading up to the election. We'll also be delivering those.

Esther A: Great.

Brenda H: Please, tell the people around you.

Esther A: That is really super good. Now, the microphone is going to the next person with the question, which is the gentleman over here. Excellent. Of course, it's on the exact other side to where Sarah ... Let's just pass the parcel down. Let's see. Yep. That's the way. Beautiful, thank you.

[02:08:00] Lee C: Thank you. I'm Lee Christophus. I'm a dance writer and peer reviewer of the Australia Council. I've worked as a mentor to young choreographers. I've been on the advisory panel for the Australian Ballet, the Western Australian Ballet. We've just done a peer review assessment of a new production by Queensland Ballet. Mr. Dreyfus made a comment before about the return of the major performing arts companies into the fold. I'd be interested in your opinion on where that should go.

[02:09:00] The major performing arts companies because of the very nature of their responsibility to maintain heritage works makes them different in some way, but they are now within peer review. The rest of the industry is under scrutiny to remarkably stiff points, which leaves many quite small and immersing choreographers who are beyond the baby stage shall we say. They are just about to hit the potential where they can become regular choreographers in a main company are not given the opportunities by the major performing arts companies.

I'm speaking specifically about dance. The Australian Ballet, the Queensland Ballet, and the WAB are not great production houses. They recycle traditional work, but they generate very little new contemporary Australian dance. They tend to borrow it from international sources. The Western Australian Ballet is the most interesting company in Australia because it does build on its own work, its own dances, its own

choreographers, and imports internationally. It's a kind of nexus which is a very creative point to blow out from.

[02:10:00] The Australian Ballet has a major audience and not the biggest budgets in the world. I'm interested in the fact to discover very recently there is a terrific discrepancy in the major performing arts company of how the smaller companies are funded. We have to deal with in that sense, which is some kind of discrepancy which has a parallel to the small to mediums. I think the medium companies some of them are approaching major status, and I also question whether the division between the majors, the medium, and the small is really a valid way to look at the whole picture. I'd be interested in your comments.

Esther A: Thank you for that question, Lee. We have in the room, I believe, Bethwin Sarah from the Australian Made Performing Arts Group. Is Bethwin still with us and would she like to respond to that? I can't quite see everybody. She is gone already has she? That is a shame because I'm sure that Bethwin would have had something really specific to say in response to that one and Lee had such a long and considered question, and at the same time, I'm being given the wind up. We have to actually wrap up the conversation; however, the good people at the Moat, which is just ...

[02:11:00]

Rachael H: Sorry. I'm going to be really fast. I just think it is worth acknowledging your comments and I don't think there is any area of arts practice that shouldn't have questions and a spotlight on the way it works. The way that the major performing arts was set up has been that way for some time and I would really encourage you to engage with the Australia Council about the questions. I actually sit on the Major Performing Arts Panel of the Australia Council and I know that my fellow panelists really welcome feedback and ideas about other ways it might be constructed.

Esther A: Rachael, thank you for that. Now, the good people at the Moat, which is just downstairs are offering happy hour drinks for us. Oh, yeah. That's the response I was after. We can continue the conversation by heading down there. I would also like to thank ... [crosstalk 02:11:57] No. We are wrapping up. I would also like to thank the interpreters. Thank you so much for keeping us all going today. A big thank you to John Boy and to Richie for making us all sound fantastic and to the Wheeler Center. Thank you so much. Now, it's over to Nicole Baer to wrap us up.

[02:12:00]

Nicole Baer: Well, I just want to thank Esther Antilitos for doing such a fantastic job of guiding and curating this conversation today. Another big thanks to the Wheeler Center and John Boy, and Norm Horton, and Sarah Monahan, and our hashtag #ausvotesarts and #istandwiththearts. Thank you. Thanks for coming.

Esther A: See you downstairs.

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