

ArtsPeak Calls for Restoration of Australia Council Funding

ArtsPeak, the national confederation of peak arts and cultural organisations, says the Australian arts ecology is under serious threat following the announcement of four-year funding decisions by the Australia Council.

Sixty-five previously funded organisations have lost funding for their core operations and of the 262 applications to the round, over half were not funded. It seems clear from these statistics that the jobs and growth mantra does not apply to the arts.

Nicole Beyer, ArtsPeak co-convenor and Director of Theatre Network Australia said: "This is an incredibly tough time for the arts sector. We go from relief at the news of a company that has been successful to sadness when we hear of really vital and outstanding organisations that have missed out. We know that the Australia Council has been stretched. We know people will have been doing their very best in an incredibly difficult situation. There is a lot of support within the sector for those who missed out this time round and everyone understands it is no reflection on the quality or importance of their work".

With the Federal election looming, ArtsPeak is calling for the restoration of Australia Council funding as a matter of urgency so that the Australian arts ecology can remain viable and vibrant. This call was made unanimously by 2700 individuals and organisations in submissions to last year's Senate inquiry into arts funding, the largest ever response to such an inquiry.

Tamara Winikoff OAM, ArtsPeak co-convenor and Executive Director of the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA), said today: "It couldn't be clearer that essential ingredients are missing: a national plan for growing and valuing Australian cultural ideas and expression; political courage to embrace experimentation and risk taking; celebration of the arts as core to our national character and achievement; and a real investment in building a vibrant, confident arts environment. It's time to stop tinkering at the edges. The arts has proved itself time and again to be an incredibly valuable investment. Please can we see all the political parties put this on the election agenda."

ArtsPeak urges politicians to recognise the value of arts and culture to all Australians, to invest in it appropriately and to ensure that the arms-length approach to funding decisions in the arts is maintained.

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