



## **Media Release 15 May 2014**

### **How does the Budget shape a strategic arts vision?**

The Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG) believes that the extent to which the cuts announced to Arts funding in the Budget will impact on arts innovation and vibrancy will take some time to fully understand.

While we are pleased that the major performing arts companies and key organisations triennial funding has been spared paring in the Budget, AMPAG is concerned about the inevitable broader impact to the arts sector of the \$87.1 million in savings, including cuts to the Australia Council of \$28.2 million.

The cuts have been targeted to 'uncommitted funding' and the arts sector waits to hear the detail of where this will be felt. Certainly, the excellence fund for the major performing arts companies, which was announced in the 2013 Budget, appears to be lost.

The arts already manage in an environment of relative austerity. The sector has been operating in an 'age of opportunity' for quite some time, stimulating private sector giving and finding innovative ways to lift box office receipts and develop new audiences.

Government funds represent only a part of what is needed for a vibrant arts community to flourish, but it is a vital part—it underpins areas of creative development and engagement that the market alone fails to do.

The MPAs can be relied on to continue with their core work—they will develop artists and engage with the community, they will mentor and partner with independent artists and companies, and they will work to ignite passion and build society's insights into our stories, sharing in the creative exchange of human expression.

They will build international relationships, tour regionally and internationally and continue the crucial role of soft diplomacy for our government in other countries.

The arts sector cultivates and stimulates creativity and emerging talent, it engages across the community and across entire lifespans, cultivating ideas, engagement, contact with diverse cultures and understanding, including working with the marginalised.

It is however more than a "sector". It is often referred to as an ecosystem, where arts, artists and arts services and 'products' cross fertilise, and generate new art forms, new collaborations and new kinds of artists.

The Budget cuts announced as part of the budget will affect the arts environment and we need to understand to what extent they indicate the new government's vision?

In responding to the Budget, AMPAG has a number of questions:

- How will the cuts to the Australia Council impact on the sector? While we are still working through the details, these cuts will affect the Majors as well as the small and key orgs and individual artists. In turn they will impact on creative engagement across all communities.
- How will cuts at the ABC affect the ABC Arts Council initiative launched just a month ago?
- What will the effect of cuts to Screen Australia be on collaboration between digital production and the arts? Innovation comes from supporting new ideas, collaboration between different forms, individuals and companies, and exploring and engaging with different perspectives.
- On a positive note the commitment to Creative Partnerships Australia over a further 4 years signals the government's intention to build support mechanisms to grow philanthropy in the arts and broader creative industries.

For more information contact:

Bethwyn Serow  
Executive Director AMPAG  
02 92535351