

NOTES FROM MEETING WITH PETER GARRETT

Date: Friday 6 August 2010

Time: 5pm

Attended for AICSA: Alison Dunn, Phil Callaghan, Lisa Philip-Harbutt, Torben Brookman

In advance of the meeting we advised the Minister that the topics that we would be most interested in discussion were:

- Acknowledgement of positive initiatives such as the new Australia Council Artist in Residence program, starting work on tax reform and arts policy.
- Improving support for artists' incomes throughout Australia Council programs.
- Australia Council functionality - is it easier to understand and work with now than it was in the past? Are there ways that we can raise the profile of the Arts?
- Federal investment into upgrading arts infrastructure including (greening and energy efficiency)

At the meeting each of the above topics were addressed by an AIC representative as follows:

Alison Dunn opened the meeting thanking the Minister for his time and willingness to meet with the AICSA and initially addressed the positive measures that have been instituted under the Labour government including the Australia Council Artist in Residence program.

Minister Garrett responded to state that he and the Labour government did not view the arts as a platform or agenda item to be thrashed out between the parties. He felt the arts was something that required support from both sides and that increasingly, both sides of politics saw the arts in this way..

He went on to say that he felt very pleased what the Labour party had achieved over its term versus what was promised. He also addressed the issue of the resale royalty scheme for visual arts and acknowledged that while there had been disquiet from some sectors of the art market, in his view this arrangement would be an important improvement for the future. He mentioned that he was very proud of the Artist in Residence program that had been instituted.

In relation to the Australia Council, the Minister talked of the internal review of policies and procedures that has taken place at the Australia Council with a view to further improving efficiencies. He said that this internal analysis has achieved positive results but that the organisation was continuing to look at its operating processes to try and find ways to reduce bureaucracy and he fully supported this move. The Minister felt that the move to triennial funding for some Aboriginal broadcasters was an example of improved operations.

The Council discussed the challenges of organisations providing feedback to the Australia Council when much of their funding was reliant on this body. The question of any alternative mechanisms to allow feedback on the Australian Council operation and procedures was raised. The Minister said that he would look at this and consider how improvements might be implemented.

The AICSA further raised the question of how South Australian artists and arts organisations could have more input into the national conversation about arts policies and developments, given our track record of innovation and the size of our state and geographical location. The Council made the point that South Australia contributes well beyond its relative size and would be actively seeking to increase its participation on a national level. The Minister responded that whatever mechanisms for feedback and development of new initiatives would have to allow feedback nationally including South Australia.

The Council queried whether Labour would be releasing an arts policy before the federal election. The Minister mentioned that Labour would be releasing a document within the next two weeks prior to the election but that it would not be a full policy document. The AICSA raised concerns about the 2010 Throsby research that shows continuing low incomes for artists and also raised concerns about the impact of government savings targets on the Australia Council. This was contrasted with the recently announced \$195 million uplift package for sport. The Minister agreed that improving artists' incomes was an ongoing task for everyone in the arts.

The AICSA asked if the Federal government would consider programs to assist the arts sector with greening initiatives that could be tied to infrastructure upgrades. The arts as a sector was very supportive of developing green initiatives and was well positioned to provide the community and other sectors with a 'best practice' example to follow given the high profile buildings such as the Adelaide Festival Centre, but may not have the financial resources to do so independently. The Minister said that while in principle he would like to provide support for green initiatives, he did not see that the Federal government providing specific funding but encouraged the sector to collaborate with others in order to achieve these outcomes.

Minister Garrett re-iterated his enthusiasm for the South Australian arts community, thanked the Arts Industry Council for their input and encouraged the Council to continue its dialogue with a federal Labour Government in the future.

The AICSA offered to communicate any further arts policy announcements to its membership.

Meeting concluded at 6.10pm