

ARTS INDUSTRY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

*an independent
voice for the arts*

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Friday 21 December 2007

The Hon Mike Rann MP
Premier, Minister for the Arts
GPO Box 2343
Adelaide SA 5001

Dear Premier,

The Arts Industry Council of South Australia (AICSA) is an independent voice for the arts in this state. We are one of only two such industry councils in Australia, where once there was an arts industry council in most states. Our members include over one hundred of the state's arts and cultural organisations and independent artists. It is to the credit of the South Australian arts sector that our collective commitment to the arts allows this tradition to continue here today.

AICSA would like to acknowledge the contribution that you and your Government have made to the arts. Since you have been in office we have been very pleased to report to our members an overall increase in the budget allocated to the arts. AICSA recognise the savings contribution the arts make to the state's Budget is small compared to other portfolios, and that funding to support arts makers has not been affected in this regard. We are hopeful that this will be true in the future as the sector is not in a position to sustain an increase in savings contributions.

AICSA would like to make particular mention of the following strategies and measures that have had a positive impact on our industry, and encourage you continue to support and expand these initiatives into the future:

- CPI increases to arts organisations.
- the return of art form-based peer assessment.
- the \$7.1 million for building upgrades over the next four years to cultural institutions allocated in the 2007-08 budget.
- AICSA supports the implementation of an Indigenous arts strategy. Such a vision will require a budget commitment in proportion to the size of the task to enable communities to reach goals. We would like to see the Indigenous arts strategy as part of a holistic arts policy for the state.
- AICSA is heartened to hear you calling for innovation and creativity to be 'placed at the centre of everything we do' in your latest message on the State Plan's website, and are encouraged to see targets for the arts and creative industries secured in the revised strategic plan. We are hopeful that 2008-09 State Budget will make additional allowances for the implementation of work towards achieving these targets without risk to existing arts expenditure categories.

In relation to the South Australian Government's commitment to the Arts in the 2008-09 Budget, AICSA identifies the following three key areas that need to be urgently addressed:

- **Arts Policy**
- **Increased investment in the South Australian Makers of art**
- **Refurbishment of the State's regional arts centres**

- **Arts Policy**

In order for South Australia's renowned leadership and strong commitment to the arts to flourish, it is vitally important for your government to develop an arts policy or action plan in consultation with the sector. A clear articulation of the governments support for the arts will not only provide a framework with which government can work, but will publicly indicate to the arts and cultural sector the commitment to and priorities identified to be addressed in order for the sector to grow and flourish into the future.

- **Increased investment in the South Australian Makers of art**

An increase in the level of investment in the *Makers* and creators of art and their engagement with companies and projects in South Australia will enable artists to increase their contribution to the growth in South Australia's creative economy. Improving funding for the Makers of art will make it possible for new works to be created to take advantage of the increased opportunities for presentation achieved through the growth in funding to *Presenter* organisations such as: the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, Adelaide Fringe Festival, Adelaide Festival of Arts and Adelaide International Film Festival.

At a micro level, the AICSA continues to advocate the findings of our proposed Independent Makers Strategy - *Innovation is Applied Creativity*, first circulated in October 2005, [www.aicsa.net.au/Innovation_creativity.pdf]. It proposes an investment of \$700,000 in additional recurrent funding to the Arts SA budget that will ensure a higher proportion of South Australian artists are able to present innovative, challenging and engaging works through-out the year and are well represented in all the festivals and events hosted by our state. Crucially, it will enable a critical mass of established independent makers to sustain a national practice while remaining based in South Australia. This modest amount of money will enhance our creative community and go a long way towards "creating a globally significant culture in the State that is exported outwards" (one of the key strategies of creative success identified/outlined by Adelaide Thinker in Residence, Matt Adams).

- **Refurbishment of the State's regional arts centres**

The AICSA is pleased the government has shown a major commitment to supporting arts infrastructure for much needed upgrades to the Dunstan Playhouse, Lions Arts Centre, South Australian Museum, and the Art Gallery of South Australia in particular. We stand by your commitment to increase access to the arts in regional centres through the new SA Regional Arts Centre for Culture Program; however, we reiterate the urgent need for refurbishment of the states regional arts centres. The four major regional arts centres built between 1980 and 1984 are arguably the Governments most significant cultural assets in the regions. Improved facilities will demonstrate a commitment to increasing access to the arts in regional centres and additionally will:

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- increase opportunities for regional artists through access to improved and appropriate facilities
- increase opportunities for metropolitan artists to show their work to a wider audience
- provide richer cultural choice for the regions through an increase in touring options through appropriately improved facilities.

This issue has been addressed to some degree, with a \$500,000 allocation made in 2003-04, and an allocation of \$500,000 per annum for four years committed until 2007-08 but this is minimal funding towards the work required. As the AICSA has previously advised the State Government, a total of approximately \$8 million was required to fully address the considerable capital work required to appropriately refurbish the four key arts centres. We understand the current cost estimate is for \$8 million more, despite the \$2 million already provided due to inflationary factors and further deterioration.

Premier, attached separately for your interest is a letter that AICSA sent to Peter Garrett in response to the Federal Labor Arts Policy Discussion Paper in August 2006. We would particularly like to draw your attention to AICSA's long term advocacy for systemic policy development at state, federal and local government levels in the following key policy areas:

- increased integration and funding of arts curricula in the education system
- a consistent framework for arts, cultural and creative industry data and trend analysis
- increase research and analysis of both economically tangible, as well as 'intangible' contributions made by the arts sector; such as its impact on knowledge; of creative solutions being developed and delivered across the economy in the areas of social justice, health and the environment; and the cultural significance and contribution the arts makes to the health of a society.
- The critical importance and contribution of the small to medium companies and independent artists in the production chain of Australia's highly sought after export quality arts and cultural works.

Once again the AICSA committee would like to thank you for your continued support for the arts in South Australia. Should you wish to discuss any issues raised in this letter, our Acting Chair Jane Andrew would be pleased to meet with you.

Yours Sincerely

Jane Andrew, Acting Chair
On behalf of the committee
Arts Industry Council South Australia