

Tuesday 31 March 2009
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. We are one of only two such industry councils remaining in Australia, where once there was an arts industry council in most states. The continuation of the AICSA is due to the support of our committee and membership. Our members include over one hundred of the State's arts and cultural organisations and independent artists. The AICSA thanks you and the government for supporting the arts in South Australia.

Since you have been in office we are pleased to report to our members an overall increase in the budget allocated to the arts. In 2008-09 initiatives in the State Budget delivered significant investment in the Film and Screen Hub, SA Film Lab and events such as the Cabaret Festival, Australian International Documentary Festival and National Screen Writers Conference. There were also significant increases for our recognised major organisations **\$1.5 million**, over four years, to the State Opera and State Theatre Company, **\$1.4 million** to Adelaide Symphony Orchestra to maintain full ensemble size and **\$500,000** for the Australian Dance Theatre to assist with increased programming, plus **\$800,000** to the State Library for IT upgrades. In addition, Murray Bridge was announced as the next South Australian Regional Centre of Culture and allocated **\$1.8 million** over two years from 2010-11.

The AICSA recognizes that the State Budget for 2009-10 is being planned in the context of difficult global financial conditions and resulting pressure on State revenue. We encourage you to continue to support previously announced initiatives. In the context of difficult financial conditions, larger arts organisations will need some budget and programming flexibility to cope with changes in patterns of consumer spending and the revenue available through sponsorship and philanthropy. AICSA suggests that Arts SA has access to contingency money to safeguard established organisations from the impact of the economic downturn.

The AICSA also recognizes that the savings contribution the arts make to the State's Budget is small compared to other portfolios, and that in the past funding to support arts makers has not been affected in this regard. We believe that this will be true in the future as arts makers are 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 to continue to support and expand these initiatives into the future:

- increased activity through the cycle and range of arts festivals supported in South Australia
- increased support for major companies

- special one-off grants and new initiatives to support smaller organisations
- theatre development strategy

In relation to the South Australian Government's commitment to the Arts in the 2009-10 Budget, AICSA identifies the following priority areas:

- 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 thrive, it is vitally important for your government to continue the arts policy dialogue with the sector. A clear articulation of the government's support for the arts in the form of arts policy and action plans, provides a strategic framework for the government, and publicly indicates to the arts and cultural sector key priorities for the future. Careful planning of future needs will ensure that new arts buildings, spaces and facilities enhance existing infrastructure and that these needs are balanced with the funding of artists that are central to the creative purpose and vitality of the arts.

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 build their contribution to the growth in South Australia's creative economy. Significant increases to the areas of events and major organisations have provided a boost to the arts sector and we trust that this trend will continue. The Arts SA, Industry Development and Project grant programs, could give further long term impetus to the sector by assisting smaller arts organisations and independent artists during a time of economic pressure, for a relatively small investment.

The AICSA also encourages the State government to maximise the impact of Federal spending on arts activity through matching Federal funding initiatives at a macro and micro level. For example, at the micro level the State can provide matching funds for initiatives such as the new Australia Council *Artist in Residence* program through Community Partnerships and the *Manager and Producer Services* program through the Theatre and Dance Board.

Refurbishment and maintenance of the State's regional arts theatres

The four major regional arts theatres built between 1980 and 1984 are arguably the most significant cultural assets in the regions. Built in the same era and to similar specifications as the Dunstan Playhouse, it is understandable that the theatres are due for some maintenance and refurbishment. Improving these facilities will demonstrate a commitment to supporting the arts across the state through major regional theatres. It will assist with marketing and audience development for the theatres and result in more employment opportunities for regional areas both in the arts and wider communities.

As the AICSA has previously advised the State Government, a total of approximately \$8 million was required to fully address the capital work required to appropriately refurbish the four key arts theatres. We understand the current cost estimate is for \$8 million more, despite the \$2 million already provided due to inflationary factors and further deterioration.

The AICSA particularly draws your attention to AICSA's long term advocacy for policy development at state, federal and local government levels in the following key areas:

- improving the income levels of artists to achieve parity with other segments of society
- increased integration and funding of arts curricula in the education system
- increased research and analysis in to the 'tangible' contribution of the arts to the economy and the 'intangible' contribution of the arts to innovation, creativity and well being
- a consistent framework for arts, cultural and creative industry data and trend analysis
- the critical importance and contribution of the small to medium companies and Independent artists to the production of Australia's export quality arts.

Once again the AICSA committee thanks you for your continued support for the arts industry in South Australia. If you wish to discuss any of the issues raised in this letter, representatives from the AICSA are happy to meet with you.

Yours sincerely,

Jodi Glass, Chair

On behalf of the committee

Arts Industry Council South Australia