

Submission to the Senate Inquiry in the Impact of the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Budget decisions on the Arts

From CHUNKY MOVE

Who We Are:

CHUNKY MOVE is Victoria's flagship contemporary dance company. Established in 1995, CHUNKY MOVE has earned an enviable reputation for producing a distinct yet unpredictable brand of genre defying dance performance.

In the last five years CHUNKY MOVE has:

- Premiered 14 new works in Melbourne which have then toured nationally and/or internationally to 19 countries
- Performed to over 140,000 audience members
- Provided 191 workshops for young people in school settings
- Directly employed, on average, 170 individual artists, creative personnel, technicians and management or administrative staff **every year** for the last five years
- Delivered this with a lean and highly efficient core team of 8 full-time staff

What We Do:

CHUNKY MOVE creates bold new contemporary dance works for Australian and international stages, often through experimental collaborations across art-forms. The company plays a pivotal leadership role within the Australian dance sector. Our sector development initiatives support and develop dancers and choreographers at key moments in their career trajectory, are an integral part of our artistic program and generate training and employment opportunities for hundreds of artists within the broader dance sector.

International Profile:

CHUNKY MOVE is a highly renowned, critically acclaimed cultural export for Australia and has toured to over 19 countries in the last 5 years alone. The company recently returned from a European tour that drew critical acclaim in Amsterdam, Paris and Berlin. As a result, the company has been invited back to perform in Germany, Portugal, Spain in 2016 and, in 2017, to perform at the European Capitals of Culture event in Aarhus, Denmark.

Role in the Dance Sector:

Our medium size company is a constant breeding ground for emerging cultural professionals to develop and expand their expertise, from artists to producers and cultural leaders. CHUNKY MOVE's activities - public performance seasons, national and international touring and the commitment to supporting the next generation of dancers and choreographers – are vital catalysts in the broader dance sector.

All of the above is outlined to demonstrate the complexity and interconnectedness of what is now at risk due to the recent changes and the uncertainty around the national arts funding framework.

Impact of Budget Changes to Australia Council

Organisational Funding:

CHUNKY MOVE's Key Organisation status with the Australia Council equates to \$381,158 in core funding per annum. This represents 31% of our annual organisational funding. In the last 5 years the Australia Council has also provided \$390,800 in project funding for new work development and touring.

Prior to the Federal Budget announcements the Company, like many other small-medium organisations, were preparing to finalise our application for the new 6 Year Funding Program. Our focus was directed to developing longer-range strategies that this organisational funding model would enable us to pursue, and the Board and management had invested significant time and money into preparing for the new strategic framework.

Long-term funding arrangements are particularly important for touring companies. We are experiencing a very real risk of missing key opportunities because of the sudden recent changes in the funding landscape.

Whilst the NPEA draft guidelines indicate that touring and cultural diplomacy projects are one of the key priorities, as a practical matter these activities can only be sustained at a level of excellence *over time* when there is stable long-term core funding to run the 'business' of an arts company.

The most immediate impact of the Budget changes is that Chunky Move is uncertain of where organisational and relevant project funding may be sourced in the immediate future. We are unable to plan our activities beyond 2015 with any confidence.

Risk to International Touring:

Several international touring invitations are on hold until the new guidelines for NPEA and the revised funding priorities of the Australia Council are confirmed. In the short term, we are at risk of having to decline touring invitations to Europe, Asia and New Zealand in 2016 as a direct result of the current uncertainty. In the longer term we are unable to agree to long term commitments without stable funding.

European festivals and venues are finalising decisions for their 2016-2017 programs before the end of September 2015. This may result in having to wait until 2017-2018, at least another two years, before returning to these countries. The impact of the current lack of funding clarity, and the loss of momentum we are experiencing is of great concern to the company.

Impact on independent Dance Artists:

A loss of momentum has a more fundamental impact to our company: trained, committed dancers, contracted on a project basis, may leave. CHUNKY MOVE needs to have a full annual program to keep the best professional dancers engaged here in Australia. Without certainty of employment and career progression, Australia's best dancers often leave to find work elsewhere, with Europe's, America's or Asia's best dance companies. Lack of momentum has immediate impact on guaranteeing the high quality the company is renowned for.

CHUNKY MOVE supports hundreds of independent artists through programs such as In-House, Maximised, Choreographic Secondment Program and the Next Move Program.

Through the Next Move Program the company invests significant resources to assist an emerging choreographer to make a full-length performance work under the guidance of CHUNKY MOVE's

artistic, technical and management team. The Next Move commissioning program is the only one of its kind in Australia and can only be continued if CHUNKY MOVE retains its current funding base.

CHUNKY MOVE's level of local, national and international activity has taken 20 years to build.

This intensity of artistic activity; public impact locally, nationally and internationally; sector development; international touring and audience reach is only possible through having the certainty of stable organisational funding, which allows for best practice strategic planning, the ability to take calculated risks and leverage other sources of income, and respond quickly to new opportunities as they arise.

CHUNKY MOVE Board of Management - 16 July 2015