

Mr BURNS: *'You mentioned the importance of and the need for not just government funding but also the importance of a creative and cultural policy within government. Did you want to elaborate on why you see it as important that government is not just looking at this as a one-off payment, but also as a long-term commitment to the culture and to the creative industry? Could you expand on that, and if there are any other lessons from COVID that were in that?'*

Additional Commentary:

There is no question that there should be a long - term commitment to the creative and cultural industry.

What should be questioned is: If community arts and cultural development – that is, Somebody's Daughter Theatre's core work - is valued or understood.

If it was, there could be no question that there would be long-term commitment, as the artistic and social benefits cannot and should not be ignored. There is no lack of evidence, SDT alone has decades of documentation, evaluation, reporting which clearly captures both the artistic and social capital outcomes. Our work has often been 'modeled' but the only long-term commitment from Government has been Australia Council funding, which ceased in 2020.

So there are two major points:

You can have all the policy in the world but unless work is valued it will mean nothing and the status quo will continue. If work is not seen and understood it can never be valued.

You can have all the evaluation in the world but if you are setting out to prove what you think you know, it is useless.

Ms BELL: *Firstly, I'd like to ask you how increasing federal funding for the arts council will actually help community arts companies—that's No. 1—and, No. 2, how do you see us measuring non-economic outcomes? Is it through individual success stories? How do you see a framework around measuring non-economic outcomes for community arts?*

Additional Commentary:

1. An established community arts company such as SDT, with a proven track record, should be funded - not just to continue - but to expand the scope, both within the communities we work and to other artists who wish to work in this art form.

Moreover, increased funding would mean that SDT productions could reach a much wider audience: as the cost to mount a production in mainstream venues from both artist resource and financial point of view is impossible if we want to maintain our ongoing work and our commitment to the communities we work with.

The reality is SDT has been in survival mode for many years, the capacity to vision, to expand, has not been possible. Artists have worked harder and harder, directors not only perform, write and direct, they write submissions and reports.

Submissions take an enormous amount of physical and emotional time.

There is no doubt that one has to prove to be worthy of a grant... but when is enough ever enough.

2. The non economic outcomes are clearly captured in SDT's reporting gathered over the years (See attached evaluation and examples of letters from those we have worked with).

The words of 'Emma' from the play, 'Mindfields' capture how the arts have transformed someone with no 'tomorrow' into a young woman who was able to 'plan, save, study' for her tomorrow (Submission 235, Letter of support #3)

"EMMA: I used to think that there was something wrong with me because what I was told the world was - wasn't what I was seeing, feeling, hearing.

I know now it wasn't me deciding to be difficult or bad

I didn't actually decide at 9 or 10 that it was easier to be 'off my face'

Kids like me see, feel, and hear things differently.

We walk a different path

We are the ones who fell from the sky without anyone there to catch us

We learnt to walk before we ever crawled-how is a child to cope? We simply removed ourselves, took our little spirit beings so far away that we are not present we're

KIDS VOICES: /on the run/ difficult/ / just won't listen/ just like your mother/just like ya brother/ just won't concentrate/ are better off in jail/ are so far behind/

EMMA: Other people talk about a tomorrow, plan, save, study for a tomorrow - we just want to survive another day

Kids like us don't walk in a straight line

You'll never know by looking at us

We don't limp or stagger

We don't walk with a cane or need help to eat

We don't have bandages

We're never gunna arrive at your destination point at your designated times - but we can get there

That's why I'm standing here today

For all the kids who...just don't fit."

Emma is only 'standing here today' because of the arts.