

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

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## Questions on Notice

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**Addressed to Regional Arts Australia**

**Hearing held on Friday 13 November 2020**

### Question 1

**Dr ALLEN:** ... I was wondering if you could you help me understand what some of the case studies of regional centres are that are sharing their knowledge and working in bids for bigger architectural grants but also just sharing across networks. Is there a network concept for communication for regional centres, or do they mostly have a hub-and-spoke response, which is to look to the city and the critical mass of the city for their creative urges? (p. 21)

### **Ros Abercrombie:**

Regional Arts Australia RAA has a critical role in contemporary regional culture, to facilitate ideas and engage across the creative and artistic sector.

RAA manages a national network of state-member organisations and regional program administrators. The strength of the regional arts sector is in the relationships and networks across the country, that work together to share knowledge, resources and support.

Our own professional development programs provide a creative framework that bridge the cultural and geographic divide and respect and value contemporary regional practice across the national arts sector. Programs such as the National Regional Arts Fellowship program & Artlands support high quality practice through professional development opportunities and cross-sector projects. They are designed to reflect and respond to emerging trends and the needs of regional artists and arts workers, and to connect creative projects with critical conversations to develop the sector.

Our programs record key achievements:

- Attracting high quality applications from across the country
- Raising the profile of regional artists and organisations
- Development of local, national and international relationships
- Continuing creative enterprise business models
- Leveraged engagement and support from creative institutions
- Professional development for Artists
- Strategic development for organisations
- Legacy projects and opportunities
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We also collaborate with several industry networks, particularly in performing arts and touring. We are about to launch a new touring advisory group (TAG). This group will be co-convened through the executive leadership of Regional Arts Australia (RAA) and Performing Arts Connections (PAC) Australia.

By co-convening the advisory group, PAC and RAA aim to ensure there is a consistent and coordinated approach to developing policy positions and strategies which will support artists, producers, presenters and tour coordinators, and ultimately audiences, involved in performing arts touring.

Below is Case Example from Victoria

*In South West Victoria, five councils, multiple state government departments, the local tourism board, the sector and the community have worked together on the developing of a Creative Industries Strategy for the region, led by Regional Arts Victoria.*

*Seven key objectives will be the focus of the four-year plan; First Nations; the South West Story; Data Collection; Testing Grounds; Professional and Enterprise Development; Creative Hubs and Youth Programs.*

*The first funded project resulting from the Strategy is already underway, the Creative Leaders project, matching young artists to industry mentors. The project is funded by VicHealth and will see young people learn how to make their way as an artist after they leave school, and link them to new skills.*

*The Creative Industries Strategy will lay the groundwork for future partnerships and projects across the region that will grow the region's creative identity. It is a benchmark document that the community can use to leverage funding and influence and make the case for their vision to have the arts more prominently regarded as useful across many sectors.*

*If is worth noting the Strategy was possible because of the central role of the local worker, funded in part by the Regional Arts Fund. More information is available at <https://strategy.rav.net.au/south-coast>*

*This is a link to a great write-up in the local paper (3 Dec 2020):*

*<https://www.standard.net.au/story/7035751/young-creatives-want-to-see-more-opportunities-in-regional-victoria/?fbclid=IwAR2JgLNTA46r4OwLy2eQoIH8BvCpPMdVvN9V6HIPLzTKcNNBlzjfBCY29g>*

There is an ongoing need for access to a national discourse. This will help overcome the many disadvantages of disparity, distance and isolation across a diverse and dispersed regional sector. We understand there is a need for nationally significant policy development with an ongoing ability to re-shape the arts from the outside in. RAA is unique in providing this kind of leadership.

We will continue to convene and participate in networks that work collaboratively to strengthen the fabric of the creative ecosystem across regional Australia with sustainable, long-term support that can inform and strengthen a robust creative sector. The opportunity to connect professionally with new peers from a wide range of arts practices is more important now than ever before. There has never has there been a more urgent need for artists and organisations from across Australia and the Asia Pacific to develop self-sustaining, professional networks.