

Committee Secretary: Senate: Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee; legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Submission by: South Australian Educators

Our Educator community are strong advocates for the Arts – and therefore are dismayed about the changed funding arrangements which will impact on our student's ability to access relevant, engaging and thought provoking Arts experiences to enhance their creativity, thinking skills and wellbeing. Our preschool has had a collaborative relationship with the Patch Theatre over a number of years. These have been rich and valuable opportunities for our students and their families to participate in relevant and dynamic arts processes. For many of our children our yearly excursion to the Patch Theatre is their first experience of live theatre and the long term benefits can be seen in the dramatic play which follows our visit.

The Australia Council process for funding small to medium arts enterprises took the creative process for Art making seriously to enable enterprises to work from a sustainable 3 year funding base. This was to be extended to a 6 year funding base, until the whole funding landscape changed through the diversion of a significant amount of funds into the Ministry for the Arts. The independent, peer review system used by the Australia Council was valued by the Arts community, as a fair way of distributing funds and ensuring a diverse and broad based ecology for creative development. The change to the Ministry of the Arts will in itself mean that valuable money will be used to set up a bureaucracy and new processes, rather than support sustainable arts development over a broad and diverse base. We would be at threat of the current small to medium arts enterprises that specifically produce creative works and experiences for children, losing their capacity to do this.

What do quality, locally produced children's theatre and arts experiences do for children?

- They foster children's creativity and thinking – essential for achievement in all learning areas
- They create innovative works that combine drama, music, dance and visual arts to support the Arts Curriculum
- They engage with communities to ensure that the works created are relevant for children, families and educators
- they provide avenues for children to extend their thinking beyond the theatre or Arts experience itself via online platforms and resources for educators
- they teach children art's processes and skills, that they can practice and use to represent their own ideas

Without support, small to medium children's theatre companies and community arts enterprises will not be able to sustain their artistic process to create new and challenging works. For audiences this will mean that the 'offerings' for children's theatre will be commercial 'off the rack' touring shows that will not be as creative, engaging or conceptually challenging for young minds.

Our children deserve better – they deserve to have Arts experiences that are developed through a rigorous artistic process to engage, provoke and stimulate their thinking.

Signed:

Name		Position
Kellie Holbrook		Director, Elizabeth O'Grady Kindergarten