

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

Questions on Notice

Addressed to Australia Council for the Arts

Hearing held on Friday 4 December 2020

Question 1 – p. 5.

Mr ZIMMERMAN: I have a quick last question. I don't know what the current situation is but in the past there was some criticism of the Australia Council and ipso facto the government for not providing financial support to the most popular arts event in Australia, Sculpture by the Sea. I'm just wondering whether there has been any change in that and whether you have any response to those previous criticisms.

Mr Collette: I don't have a response to Sculpture by the Sea. I'd really have to look very closely at the reasons why that didn't get through a competitive grants process... Sculpture by the Sea—I'm afraid that, sitting here, I don't have an answer for you. We could—

Mr ZIMMERMAN: How about if you take it on notice?

Answer:

The Australia Council has worked with Sculpture by the Sea over many years to assist with feedback on unsuccessful applications and provide pre-application advice, as we do with many arts organisations. Competition for Australia Council support is always competitive; this includes for support through the multi-year Four Year Funding for Organisations program.

Applications for Four Year Funding were assessed in a competitive process by industry peers, who ranked the applications according to the published criteria. A total of 412 Expressions of Interest were received in Stage One, following which 162 organisations were invited to submit a full application in Stage Two (representing a 39% success rate). Peers reviewing the Sculpture by the Sea application did not consider it a priority for multi-year funding at the EOI stage. Sculpture by the Sea is eligible to apply to the Australia Council's arts projects grant programs for support.

In the 2019/2020 financial year we supported 21.1 million attendances at Australia Council funded arts activities, including 2.6 million attendances for works by First Nations artists. The Australia Council will continue to advocate for increased investment in the arts, to enable more organisations and artists to realise their artistic programs which in turn have great social, economic and cultural benefit for all Australians.