

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

Division: Office for the Arts

Inquiry: Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Topic: Arts response to COVID-19

Question Type: Written (03/07/2020)

Senator Gallagher asked:

1. Please describe the appointments process for the Creative Economy Taskforce. Who will be the final decision-maker on appointees, and will the Prime Minister be consulted?
2. The Office for the Arts has described the Minister as the final decision maker on grants for the \$75 million Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund and the \$35 million Supporting Sustainability of Sector-Significant Organisations Fund.
 - a. Why was the Australia Council not allowed to administer this funding itself?
 - b. What form of consultation will take place with the Australia Council?
 - c. Will the Australia Council put forward a shortlist?
 - d. Will the Minister consult with the Australia Council on the final decision in terms of grant recipients?
3. What transparency measures and safeguards will exist to stop decision-making on grant funding being influenced by political concerns?
4. Has the government set a deadline by which it expects funds from these grant schemes to start flowing to the arts and entertainment sector?
5. Given that the RISE Fund is capped at \$75 million, what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that individual artists have equal chance for funds when competing with multi-million dollar events companies and promoters?

Answer:

1. Appointments to the Creative Economy Taskforce will follow the process set out in the Department's Appointments Guidelines, including appropriate consultation. The Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts will be the final decision-maker.
2.
 - (a) The Office for the Arts is experienced in managing funding programs and has policy oversight of the Government's COVID-19 arts response. Both funding programs have a broader remit for activities in parts of the sector that the Australia Council does not fund.
 - (b) The Australia Council will be consulted during the assessment process on matters relevant to the expertise of Australia Council staff.
 - (c) No.
 - (d) Yes. The Minister will consult with the CEO of the Australia Council.

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3. The administration of all grants will be consistent with the *Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines* and eligibility criteria and decision-making set out in published grant guidelines for each program.
4. Grants funding is to be delivered in 2020-21. Grant guidelines are currently being developed and will be released in the coming weeks.
5. Grant guidelines are currently being developed and will be released in the coming weeks. All applications will be assessed against eligibility and program criteria, as well as value for money and overall consideration of representation across art forms, types of activity, geographic diversity, and the employment opportunities provided by activities.