

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Spill-Over Hearing March 2017
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 272

Program 2.1

Hansard Ref: Page 24, 24/03/2017

Topic: Arts Program Rounds – Concerns from Arts sector

Senator Bilyk, Catryna asked:

Senator BILYK: Are you able to point me to any deliberative progress that has been made other than general meetings? Has this been discussed at meetings? Do you know if this has been discussed? What has the outcome of those discussions been? I am asking about the progress that has been made.

Dr Arnott: I do not have any specific things that I can identify at the moment. Certainly the Australia Council would be able to comment more extensively about how its programs align with state and territory governments. You could ask the Australia Council to provide some further information on that.

Senator BILYK: But does the ministry also work with state and territory governments? I thought you said you did.

Dr Arnott: Yes.

Senator BILYK: What about the arts sector? Have there been meetings with them about trying to sort this out?

Dr Arnott: I am not aware that there are any specific concerns from the arts sector about the timing of the Department of Communications and the Arts arts program rounds. I think they are welcomed by the sector, and the timing is well-known and is included in the various program guidelines. I am not aware that there is anything that needs to be addressed in that particular area.

Senator BILYK: Have you asked them?

Mr Eccles: We talk very regularly about a whole range of things, and there is always an opportunity for them to air any concerns. As the minister said, we are lucky that in this sector they are not backward in coming forward in letting us know what their views are.

Senator BILYK: I am just trying to get a handle on the actual progress that has been made around that recommendation.

Mr Eccles: I think the key thing is that where the rubber hits the road is really the interface between the Australia Council grants programs and the state and territory grants programs. If the senator wishes, we can have a chat with the Australia Council and provide you with a more full response.

Answer:

Recommendation 7 of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee report *Impact of 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth budget decisions on the arts* states that:

“The committee recommends that the Ministry for the Arts work with the Australia Council, the state and territory governments and the arts sector to develop and implement streamlined and coordinated grants processes and timelines, to the greatest extent possible, in order to minimise the administrative burden on applicants seeking funding from different bodies and programs.”

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The Department continues to work with the Australia Council, the states and territories and the sector to implement Recommendation 7. It is an ongoing process given ongoing changes to grant program arrangements.

The forum in which the Australia Council discusses the streamlining and coordination of grants is the All Jurisdictions meeting, which is held each year.

Examples of significant programs where coordination is embedded are:

- The Australia Council's Four Year Funding for arts organisations was developed in close consultation with state and territory arts funding agencies. State and territory arts organisation funding is aligned to the greatest extent possible with the Australia Council's Four Year Funding.
- The Visual Arts and Craft Strategy provides supplementary funding to small to medium organisations in addition to Four Year Funding and state and territory arts organisation funding through an agreed framework.
- The major performing arts companies are funded jointly through the Australia Council and relevant state funding agencies. This funding is managed under tripartite or quadripartite funding agreements between all parties, administered by the Australia Council. The *National Framework for Governments' Support of the Major Performing Arts Sector* is overseen by the Meeting of Cultural Ministers. The Department works closely with the Australia Council on its administration of the Framework.