

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates February 2017
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 50

Program 2.1

Hansard Ref: Written, 09/03/2017

Topic: Australia Council budget cut implications

Senator Hanson-Young, Sarah asked:

1. Australia's peak arts body, the Australia Council, was blindsided when the Federal Government ripped \$104 million from its budget in 2015. How many small to medium arts organisations that were previously funded by the Australia Council have closed since the Federal Government reduced their funding?
2. How many artists and/or arts students have been negatively affected?
3. How many jobs have been lost as a result?
4. What money been returned to the Australia Council funding envelope, following the cuts in 2015?
5. Will the rest of the money that was cut be returned?

Answer:

1. No organisation has closed solely due to cessation of Australia Council funding. The Australia Council understands that Platform Youth Theatre closed in 2016. Platform Youth Theatre previously received annual funding for a program of activity as a youth organisation from the Australia Council between 2004 and 2015. Platform Youth Theatre submitted an application to the Australia Council's Arts Projects for Organisations program in 2015, however the program was highly competitive and the organisation was unsuccessful.
2. Compared to 2014-15, the Australia Council supported 273 fewer individual artists through its grant programs and strategic initiatives in 2015-16, as reported in the Australia Council's 2014-15 and 2015-16 Annual Reports. The Australia Council does not collect data on funding to arts students supported through its programs.
3. The Australia Council does not have this information across the sector.
4. As announced on 18 March 2017, \$80.2 million over four years in committed and uncommitted funds will be transferred to the Australia Council from 2017-18. This amount includes \$8 million a year to be returned in each of 2017-18 and 2018-19, as announced in late 2015.
5. This is a matter for the Government.