Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2010-2011

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Arts Agencies
Australia Council

Question: PM50

Topic: Additional funds for organisations - NBN

Asked By: Senator Humphries

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Senator HUMPHRIES — Could I ask you to take on notice the tabling of information about the specific additional funds that have been provided to the organisations that you fund that are designed to help them take advantage of opportunities like the NBN?

Answer:
For many years, the Australia Council has been supporting artists and arts organisations to take advantage of high speed broadband technologies like the NBN, which allows for new, cheaper and faster ways to create, distribute and experience art. It also creates a new way for artists to make independent incomes through national and international reach. In addition to funding for digital media projects provided through the Council's annual grants programs, the Council has created a number of initiatives that will allow artists to take advantage of opportunities like the NBN. They can be divided into two broad categories of funding:

- The *Arts content for the digital era* strategic priority
- Specific artform board initiatives

Arts content for the digital era
Since 2008 the Australia Council has implemented this cross-council strategic priority to increase Australian arts content being created, promoted, distributed, enjoyed, accessed and preserved on digital platforms. The Council's objective in undertaking this initiative is to explore new arts practices and support the development of content that can be distributed via broadband media, mobile phones, and broadcast. The aim is to build new audiences and opportunities so arts organisations and artists can interact with each other and the public via new digital opportunities. Projects funded under this strategic priority are:

- supporting artists to complete the Mobile Enterprise Grant Alliance (MEGA) program; a business incubator program for digital start-up companies ($120,000 2008-9, $40,000 2009-10)
- 'Revealing the Arts' sector wide forum co-produced with ABCTV to explore issues associated with the digital and broadband environment ($51,600 in 2009-10)
- marketing/ePhilanthropy research project between Western Australian arts organisation Artrage and Gramercy Park Consultants. The project explored the use of

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social digital media tools to support the marketing and fundraising objectives of an arts organisation ($5,000 in 2009-10)

- a Digital Archives scoping study, raising awareness around the issues surrounding archiving both digital and analogue art works for access and preservation ($30,000 in 2009-2010)
- the 'Geek in Residence' program which matches new media professionals with arts organisations through a subsidised secondment scheme to increase skills and confidence within those organisations. The aim is to create a holistic cultural shift across the whole of that organisation, through artistic programming, general operations and audience development ($220,000 in 2009-10; $360,000 in 2010-11)
- the 'Digital Culture Fund' which provides grants to artists working with live, interactive work with a strong focus on the audience's engagement ($180,000 in 2009-10, $180,000 provided to date in 2010-11)
- live broadcasts of major Australian performances across ABC2 and into regional cinemas via digital platforms and support for events as Art and Soul ($180,000 in 2009-10, $218,000 in 2010-11)
- 'Artist rights in the digital era' Roundtable discussions to bring together sector representatives to explore issues associated with artists rights ($2,800 in 2009-10, $3,000 in 2010-11)
- TransmediaVictoria, a two-day event in January 2011, held to raise awareness and understanding of this emerging marketplace for artists and media producers. The Australia Council is now working with the major funding partners from the event to develop a pilot funding round designed to support creative projects in this field ($40,000 in 2009-10, $100,000 earmarked for 2010-11)
- a strong online and social media presence to act as a role model and educator in the digital communications space, teamed with active physical networking such as the Digital Program Tour 2009 and 2010, and Geek Speed Dating events ($15,000 in 2009-10, $25,000 in 2010-11)
- 'Genart_sys | a window on digital culture', which is a public foyer exhibition and public program to showcase the breadth of digital work supported across the whole of Council ($5,000 in 2010-11)
- support towards a three year Australian Research Council linkage research project exploring artists and the games industry ($15,000 per annum for 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13).

Specific Artform Board Initiatives
Since 2007, the following initiatives have supported artists and arts organisations to take advantage of high speed broadband technologies like the NBN:

Darker Edge of Night

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This ArtLab initiative used biometric sensing of a dancers body to create real-time visions and sound mixed screen projections based on this data. The artists explored the potential for this technology to be used across a network.
Funding 2006-2007: $75,000

Story of the Future Initiative *2006-2008*
Story of the Future was a Literature Board initiative to help writers develop digital, interactive and cross-platform narratives. The initiative helped foster participants' skills in digital and cross-artform collaboration and supported the creation of content for new technology platforms.
Funding 2007-2008: $198,923

Second Life Artist Residency 2007
The aim of this residency was to offer Australian artists and writers the opportunity to creatively explore new interactive, virtual platforms. The work was in an internet and social media based environment.
Funding 2007-2008: $20,000

New Work (Media Arts) Music 2007-2011
The Australia Council offers two New Media grant rounds per year. Many of the projects funded rely heavily on the use of digital and web technology and the development of the NBN has the potential to enhance the capacity of what is possible for applicants to achieve through this category.
Funding $144,000 in 2007-2008, $144,067 in 2008-2009, $117,699 in 2009-2010:

MMUVE IT! 2008
MMUVE IT! was an initiative for an art project in a massive multi-user virtual environment (MMUVE). The grant aimed to provide Australian artists with an opportunity to creatively explore interactive, virtual spaces, with a particular focus on the body and 'mixed realities'.
Funding 2008-2009: $30,000

Australian Centre for Virtual Arts Laboratory (ACVA Lab) 2009
ACVA Lab is an initiative to promote the work of Australian artists and technologists using internet based, virtual world platforms.
Funding 2008-2009: $45,000

Digital and New Media writing grants 2011
The Literature Board is offering New Work grants for Digital and New Media writing, with funds set aside for four writing projects.
Funding 2011-2012: $60,000