

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Group: 2

Program: 2.1

Question: BE14/017

Senator Wright asked the following question at the hearing on 26-29 May 2014:

Senator WRIGHT: I do not underestimate the challenge that you have in terms of determining fairly quickly how you are going to manage this. I might come back to the question that I asked earlier of the department about the effects of funding on rural and regional arts communities in Australia. I heard that there is going to be quarantining of regional arts funding, but I want to know that that would not mean that individual artists organisations, who may be seeking Australia Council grants in regional areas, will miss out given that you have talked about a \$9 million reduction. The question is: what will be the effect on regional arts communities? The other part of my question is: how soon will the granularity be determined so that we actually know how these cuts will be affecting the arts communities in Australia?

Mr Grybowski: In terms of the regional question and regional funding, some \$11.8 million is preserved and this is unchanged. It is also very important to note that other parts of our budget, for example the major performing arts companies, tour extensively to regional centres in Australia and that will not be impacted. Certainly, as part of our discussions with those companies, they see the broadest access for Australians in all parts of urban and rural centres as significant. Similarly our key organisations, the small to medium sector, again, part of the budget which is untouched, undertake extensive regional touring, so that will be impacted.

Senator WRIGHT: And I will put the question on the time line on notice.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

Funding for the National Regional Programmes has been preserved in the 2014-15 Budget. This includes:

- Playing Australia: Regional Performing Arts Touring Fund
- Visions of Australia: Regional Exhibition Touring Fund
- Festivals Australia: Regional Festival Project Fund
- Contemporary Touring Initiative
- Contemporary Music Touring Program

Core funding for the Major Performing Arts companies and Key Organisations has also been maintained in the 2014-15 Budget. These organisations regularly tour to regional centres and also engage with regional Australian schools through their education programmes.

It is not possible to ascertain whether there will be an impact on regional communities as a result of the reduction in funding. The Australia Council is considering the most appropriate ways to apply the budget adjustment, with a focus on minimising the impact across the sector. The details will be determined as part of the implementation of the new grants model from January 2015.