

For: Minister's Office

Copy: Ministry for the Arts

Subject: Australian Festival of Chamber Music (AFCM) – Australia Council funding

Date: 7 October 2014

1. KEY POINTS

- The Australian Festival of Chamber Music (AFCM) has been funded as an Australia Council Key Organisation since 2009.
- In 2013 AFCM applied unsuccessfully for Key Organisations funding (2014-2016). Further detail about this decision is included in [Background](#). The Australia Council provided AFCM with one year transitional funding for 2014 at the same level (\$61,880) to allow the organisation to apply to other Music grant rounds.
- In the May 2014 the AFCM applied to the Music Program Grant round for \$50,000 annual program funding but this application was not successful. The panel considered that the proposed program was not strong on providing direct benefits to the artists and art form.
- Australia Council Music staff members will meet with the Chair and General Manager of AFCM on Friday 10 October to provide feedback on the unsuccessful Music Program Grant application. The Australia Council will advise AFCM to consider applying to the Presentation and Promotion grant round in November 2014. AFCM will also be advised of the options available through the Australia Council's new grants model with closing dates in 2015 for funding from 2016 onwards.

2. BACKGROUND

AFCM Key Organisations funding

Following the 2010 festival, the AFCM faced significant financial challenges. Australia Council Music staff worked closely with the AFCM to monitor its financial viability. AFCM raised \$250,000 through philanthropic donations and a loan from Arts Queensland. The organisation is now in a consolidated financial position.

In 2011, the third year of AFCM's 2009-2011 Key Organisations funding, the then Music Board extended the funding agreement by one year while undertaking a broader review of funding for music festivals. The Music Board did not proceed with implementing new funding arrangements for festivals, as this was overtaken by the broader review of Council and its funding programs. Consequently, in 2012 the agreement with AFCM was extended by a further year to the end of 2013, to allow the organisation to apply in 2013 for the new round of Key Organisations funding 2014-2016.

As a result of these circumstances, the application made by the AFCM in 2013 for Key Organisations funding (2014-2016) was the first since 2008.

In assessing the AFCM Key Organisations application for 2014-2016 the panel did not consider the organisation's artistic program to be competitive in the round, nor did they consider that AFCM presented a strong case within the Key Organisations framework as either leading innovators that consistently stretch their art form practice; and/or an acknowledged centre of excellence in their particular form of practice. It was resolved that a year of funding at the current level would be offered for 2014 to assist AFCM to exit the Key Organisations category, but that AFCM would be better considered for project grants from 2015.

In early September 2013 Australia Council staff discussed with Arts Queensland AFCM's performance in the Key Organisations (2014-16) funding round. Arts Queensland highlighted AFCM's significance in the Queensland context but acknowledged the concerns relating to the organisation's artistic programming. The Australia Council advised Arts Queensland of the outcome prior to notification.

2014 Australia Council organisational support for music in Queensland

The Australia Council currently provides Key Organisations funding to two Queensland based organisations:

- Topology – Key Organisations funding (2014-2016) \$85k per annum.
- Southern Cross Soloists – emerging Key Organisations funding (2014-2016) \$50k per annum.

In addition to this, four significant program grants have been awarded this year as follows:

- \$45,000 to the Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre for its 2015 program.
- \$50,000 to Camerata of St John's for its 2015 subscription season.
- \$50,000 to the Queensland Music Network to provide a targeted regional artist development program.
- \$50,000 to the Queensland Youth Orchestras for concert tours, music camps, rehearsals and tutorials for young musicians.

The Australia Council has also provided \$125,000 to the Trustee for the Brisbane Powerhouse Foundation for the creative development and presentation of two new works of Australian music theatre.

Key Organisations

Multi-year funding is allocated to small to medium arts organisations which are recognised for their national leadership in artistic vibrancy and the critical role they play in the Australian arts landscape. The Australia Council manages funding relationships with Key Organisations to ensure the highest level of artistic achievement and sustainability through a balance of community relevance, artistic vibrancy and financial reserves.