

Arts Advocacy delivers results

Collective strength heard locally and federally



Paul Kaptein, works in studio, 2017. Artsource Fremantle Open Studios. Photographer: Christophe Canato

Artsource, collectively with organisations across the arts sector, has effectively advocated on behalf of Western Australia's visual artists, sending the clear message to federal and state governments; undo the defunding of the Australia Council in 2015 and recognise the value of artists in their communities by delivering policy that invests in the talent of our artists.

The Labor Party's adoption of an Arts and Culture policy in the lead up to the WA State Election, along with the recent Turnbull government announcement that funds will be returned to the independent Australia Council from the government's Catalyst Fund, represents years of advocacy at Federal and State levels coming to fruition.

The *#ArtsImprovesLives* campaign, led by the Chamber of Art and Culture WA, gave voice to the stories of local artists and expressed the importance of State Government having an Arts and Culture policy, and for that policy to include specific outcomes for the visual arts. We were pleased to see the Labor Party announce its *Creative WA** Policy at the Arts Debate, held prior to the election.

With the Labor Party now forming government and the appointment of the new Arts Minister, the Hon. David Templeman, Leader of the House, we look forward to seeing these policy initiatives implemented, specifically:

- > Allocating \$10 million towards the redevelopment of the Art Gallery of Western Australia rooftop as a regular cultural and commercial venue.
- > Leveraging our rich artistic and cultural life to promote tourism and jobs in WA.
- > Committing a further \$2million per annum from Royalties for Regions to boost the reach of touring art exhibitions.

Our Chair and CEO presented evidence directly to the Senate Enquiry into arts funding and participated fully in the Federal *#freethearts* campaign, led by ArtsPeak (where Artsource is represented through both NAVA and

the Chamber of Arts and Culture WA). The objective was to restore funding to the Australia Council in 2015, and we are delighted that this campaign has finally been successful. Over the weekend, the Federal Arts Minister, the Hon. Mitch Fifield, announced that most of the funds used to establish the National Program for Excellence in the Arts, later renamed Catalyst, will be returned to the Australia Council from 1 July 2017.

Sadly, much damage has been done in the intervening period, with small to medium arts organisations losing vital four-year organisational funding, including NAVA, and the destabilisation of part of our ecology. Whilst there is no detail yet on how the Australia Council will allocate these funds, we remain hopeful that some will be directed to benefit individual artists as well as small to medium organisations.

Gavin Buckley, Artsource CEO, says *“Advocacy is an ongoing and relentless task for Artsource. We often see change occur gradually as a result of our collective efforts on behalf of our members and the broader arts sector. But this week we see the culmination of years of advocacy at both Federal and State levels to remind us that we cannot stop working constructively for positive change; to ensure the value of artists is recognised and that the concerns of artists are heard.”*

Artsource calls on the State and Federal governments to demonstrate strong political will and leadership by building a stronger arts and culture policy, including:

- > A long-term National Arts Policy, supported by evidence-based data and shaped by open and respectful consultation with the arts and cultural sector, including individual artists.
- > Commitment to properly resource the implementation of the National Arts Policy to achieve its objectives.
- > Recognition of the challenges that large states like WA face in giving artists, audiences and communities access to, and participation in, diverse arts and cultural activities throughout the state and beyond our borders.
- > Commitment to the primacy and independence of the Australia Council for the Arts as the major arm’s length federal arts funding body.
- > A greater and more collegiate collaboration between the Ministry for the Arts, the Australia Council and the state arts funding agencies so that a truly national grid exists to support artists, arts organisations and audience development.

*[https://www.markmcgowan.com.au/files/Creative_WA - Supporting the Arts and Creative Industries.pdf](https://www.markmcgowan.com.au/files/Creative_WA_-_Supporting_the_Arts_and_Creative_Industries.pdf)

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Artsource is the peak membership body for visual artists in Western Australia

We have over 950 members sharing our vision of a world in which culture and the arts are valued as vital and where visual arts flourish. We support artists and help to build their practice and careers with practical, affordable and relevant services, opportunities and represent their interests. Artsource champions the value of the visual arts to a growing audience around Western Australia, our nation and internationally.