



FACT SHEET: Tuesday, June 28, 2016

Election 2016: How the parties compare

MEAA wrote to the leaders of the Liberal, Labor and Greens parties and key independents on June 9 to seek commitments to the arts, screen and whistleblower policies listed below (read more about [the arts and screen policies here](#), and the [whistleblower](#) policies here). Replies were received from the Liberal Party and the Labor Party.

Where replies were received, they have been noted. “No response” indicates there has been no response to the specific issue raised in the MEAA correspondence. “Unclear” means there was no reply to MEAA’s correspondence *and* the party has no clear policy on its website.

Legend:

- * Coalition position on the Australia Council drawn from comments by Arts Minister Mitch Fifield at National Arts Debate, Melbourne, on June 8. (Liberal website: liberal.org.au)
- † Coalition position on ABC and SBS funding drawn from 2016-17 Federal Budget announced on May 3.
- *** Coalition response on [June 27](#) to correspondence from MEAA.
- ** Labor Party policy positions are drawn from [announcements](#) during the election campaign and correspondence to MEAA on [June 20](#) (arts) and [June 25](#) (whistleblowers).
- *† Australian Greens policy positions drawn from [Greens’ website](#).
- ††† Australian Arts Party policy positions drawn from the [party website](#).

See the table on the following pages for details of the parties’ policies

Australia Council funding				
What MEAA wants	Coalition	Labor**	Greens*†	Arts Party†*†
Abolish Catalyst and return of funding for Australia Council grants programs.	Will maintain Catalyst but seek improve its transparency.*	Yes, with money redirected to restore funding to Australia Council.	Yes.	The Catalyst program to continue but be resourced with separate new funding, as well as more transparency in funding decisions.
Restoration of Australia Council funding to at least 2013-14 levels.	No, but says the Australia Council's most recent funding round of \$28 million was higher than the previous round.***	Yes, plus additional \$20 million in new funding over 4 years. Arts policy commitments total \$176.6 million over four years.	Yes. Arts policy commitments total \$270.2 million in new funding over four years.	Yes, and a tripling of the existing grants program equating to \$124 million in additional annual funding.
Guarantee of ongoing funding for the duration of the next term of government.	No response.	No response.	Unclear.	Yes.

Public broadcasting				
What MEAA wants	Coalition†	Labor**	Greens*†	Arts Party†*†
Restoration of funding to the ABC and SBS	Additional \$6.9 million for SBS in 2016-17 to replace “lost” advertising revenue. But also removed \$18.6 million from ABC specialist news services over forward estimates.†	Not in full, but has promised \$81 million for local drama and sport.	In principle supports ABC and SBS to be funded to continue to be leaders in news and entertainment.	The reversal of the funding cuts imposed on the ABC since the 2013 budget and a programming fund of \$200 million a year created, to support new ABC and SBS programming, from drama to children’s TV.

Screen Australia funding				
What MEAA wants	Coalition***	Labor**	Greens*†	Arts Party†*†
Restoring Screen Australia funding to 2013-14 levels (\$100m) commencing 2016-17.	No.	No, but will provide additional \$60 million to ABC for local drama production.	In principle supports adequate funding to maintain a healthy Australian film industry and to ensure Australia's cultural media history is preserved and protected.	Yes.
No further cuts for the duration of the term of the next Government.	No response.	Open to discussion.	Unclear.	Unclear.
Maintenance and development of content quotas and minimum investment requirements for screen production and broaden these to apply to all technology platforms.	No response.	Open to discussion.	Will establish a taskforce to investigate opportunities and risks from digitisation.	Unclear.
Maintenance of an effective system to regulate imports of overseas performers and crew in the arts and entertainment industries which maximises the use of the Australian labour force.	No response.	Open to discussion.	Unclear.	Unclear.

Screen production incentives				
What MEAA wants	Coalition***	Labor**	Greens*†	Arts Party†*†
A uniform 40% rebate for productions across formats.	No response.	Open to discussion.	Unclear.	Greater support for the Australian Producer Offset and expansion of its use to include all areas of the Screen Industry (Film, Television, GamesDevelopment, Platform Independant Digital / Online Endeavours etc.)
Increasing the Location Offset to a 30% rebate.	No, but has provided Location Offset top-ups of \$68.8 million to help bring \$400 million of production to Australia.	Open to discussion.	Unclear.	Continue to support the current Location Offset.
Maintain the existing Post, Digital and Visual Effects (PDV) offsets for the duration of the next term of government	No response.	Open to discussion.	Unclear.	Yes.

Whistleblower protections			
What MEAA wants	Coalition***	Labor**	Greens*†
Consolidated public and private sector whistleblower legislation	No, but will introduce new whistleblower protections for people who disclose information about tax misconduct to the Australian Tax Office.	Will extend public sector whistleblower protection laws to private and not-for-profit sector.	In principle supports protection of anonymous journalistic sources to ensure press freedom.
An independent statutory office or Public Interest Disclosure Panel	No response.	No response.	Unclear.
The right to disclose information to the media in cases where the public interest is threatened.	Coalition not considering any changes to the Public Interest Disclosure Act.	No response.	Unclear.
Immunity from suit or direct assistance for legal costs in defending actions where the disclosure has been made in good faith and the discloser and journalist believe the information to be true	No response.	No response.	Unclear.

Strengthen penalties – including imprisonment – for impliedly or actually taking or threatening reprisal against a person because they have made or propose to make a disclosure	No response.	Anyone who takes adverse action against whistleblowers will face two years jail and an \$18,000 fine.	Unclear.
A protected fund to be created where a proportion of funds from successful prosecutions and settlements are preserved to support whistleblowers whose future employment is unviable due to their disclosures.	No response.	Whistleblowers will be able to take civil action for reinstatement and compensation.	Unclear.

More information, contact: communications@meaa.org or phone 1300 656 513