



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Government neglect of the arts continues in Federal Budget

Last night's Federal Budget continues a pattern of neglect and contempt for Australian arts by the Coalition Government, says the union for arts and entertainment workers.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance says the sector is doomed to return to the under-investment of the pre-COVID years with the Budget documents showing federal government spending on the arts treading water at best as short-term relief for the pandemic is wound up.

There are no new initiatives in the Budget, and some agencies will suffer a funding cut in the next financial year.

"This year's Budget continues a pattern of neglect and lack of vision for the arts by the Morrison Government," said MEAA Chief Executive Paul Murphy.

"It is well documented that the arts and entertainment sectors have been devastated by the impact of COVID-19. Shows were cancelled, livelihoods lost, and countless workers have left the industry.

"The Federal Government continues to maintain the fiction that it provided billions of dollars in support for arts workers through JobKeeper, but the reality is that very little of the emergency funding provided has filtered down to arts workers.

"What is worse is that now the 'emergency' is over, that funding will dry up over the next 12 months with a pitiable allocation of just \$20 million towards recovery from COVID.

"Is there no limit to the contempt this government holds for arts workers?"

MEAA analysis of the Budget reveals that the allocation to regional arts will fall from \$18 million this year to \$7.5 million next year, and support for film and television will be slashed from \$195 million to \$150 million. Funding to Screen Australia will be cut from \$39.5 million this year to \$27.8 million next year and \$11.6 million in 2023-24.

While the Australia Council has avoided major cuts, there is no new investment for it or other major cultural institutions.

The Budget papers confirm the end of the funding freeze which cost the ABC \$84 million over the past three years, but no measures to rectify the massive cuts to ABC funding since 2013.

"Since the Coalition has been in power \$526 million has been slashed from ABC and 640 jobs have been lost," Mr Murphy said.

"The restoration of indexation merely means the end of a freeze that should never have been introduced in the first place."

More information: Mark Phillips, 0422 009 011 or mark.phillips@meaa.org

📍 PO Box 723 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012 ☎ 1300 656 513

BUILT ON INTEGRITY. POWERED BY CREATIVITY. MEAA.ORG

ABN 84 054 775 598