



**MEDIA RELEASE: Wednesday, June 8, 2016**

## **Healthy debate puts arts funding on the election agenda, but Coalition missing in action**

The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, the union and industry advocate for media and arts professionals, has welcomed the healthy debate about the future of arts funding in Australia and looks forward to further commitments from political parties as election day nears.

MEAA Equity director Zoe Angus said Labor and the Greens had now announced comprehensive – and in some cases, bold – arts policies as part of their election platforms.

The commitment by the current Arts Minister, Mitch Fifield, to consult more with the arts sector in the future was also a positive step, however, Ms Angus said the Coalition was yet to put forward a policy on which it could be judged.

“It is extremely disappointing that at today’s National Arts Debate in Melbourne, Senator Fifield was given numerous opportunities to outline the Coalition’s arts policy for the election, but he declined to do so. In fact, Senator Fifield was so evasive on this issue that it appears the Coalition will not have an arts policy and is missing in action.

“All Senator Fifield had to say today was a growing and prosperous economy would provide an environment for innovative arts and cultural industries. This type of trickle down economics is no substitute for a real arts funding policy.

“If it is to be the case that the Coalition will not unveil a policy, it would be another significant let down for Australia’s performing arts and screen sectors following the cuts to funding for the Australia Council and Screen Australia over the past two years.”

By contrast, Labor and the Greens have now released comprehensive policies, with both parties pledging to fully restore funding to the Australia Council, abolish the Catalyst fund, and provide new funding to the ABC and regional and community arts.

“Both Labor and the Greens understand that arts funding is an investment in a creative and innovative industry with substantial flow-on benefits for the economy and society,” Ms Angus said.

“These policies would restore not only funding, but predictability to an arts sector that has been wracked by turmoil over the past two-plus years.

“Ultimately on election day, voters will need to judge the parties by both their past actions and by the substance of what they would do in the future.”

Additionally, the Greens have flagged a new mutual obligation scheme to allow artists earning below a certain amount of income to receive Centrelink payments as a “living wage”, coupled with an increased superannuation offset of \$1000 for artists.

“This is an innovative approach, however we will seek more information to better understand how it would be implemented and who would be eligible,” Ms Angus said.

**For more information contact:**

**Mark Phillips – phone: 03 9691 7105; email: [mark.phillips@meaa.org](mailto: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