

#FreetheArts

George Brandis recently cut \$104.8 million from the national peer-reviewed funding body the Australia Council to create a 'National Program for Excellence in the Arts' – which will fund projects at the minister's discretion. It will not support literature, film, individual artists, organisations or art that is diverse, provocative or new. The federal government severely cut funding to other arts organisations too, such as Screen Australia and the National Gallery. **The arts have lost \$125 million.**

To put these figures in perspective: in 2011, the arts sector directly employed 531,000 people, and created another 3.7 million jobs. In 2008–9, the arts contributed \$86 billion (7%) to the Australian GDP. More importantly, 9 out of 10 Australians participate in the arts!

But these cuts will destroy thousands of arts organisations in Australia – smaller theatre companies and ensembles, literary magazines, dance groups, galleries and our next generation of artists, writers, performers and theatre makers.

We are totally opposed to George Brandis's NPEA! We don't believe culture in Australia should be controlled by the government of the day. And we don't want art to be more expensive, and thus only available to those who can afford to see it or make it.

We also think the government will use the NPEA as an excuse to completely disband the Australia Council, our 42-year-old democratic funding body.

If you care about the arts in Australia, we're asking you to:

1. Contact your local member to tell them you're unhappy about the NPEA; that you support democratic, peer-reviewed arts funding
2. Contact the arts organisations you're connected to and express your concerns about the future of Australia's artistic ecosystem
3. Join the mailing list to keep updated on the campaign:
FreeTheArtsCampaign@gmail.com

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What we want:

1. George Brandis to return the \$125 million stolen from the Australia Council and the arts sector in the 2015–2016 budget
2. The abolishment of the National Program for Excellence in the Arts – an undemocratic and nepotistic program that is entirely inappropriate for a democracy
3. More money for the arts – because they've been underfunded by successive governments for years

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