

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 2020

**JOINT STATEMENT – IN RESPONSE TO:  
FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS 2021–2024**

Opera Queensland, Queensland Ballet, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Theatre and Circa recognise the importance of a balanced arts ecology in Australia and our commitment to collaborations across all cultural sectors is unwavering.

As part of the vibrant and varied collective of Queensland arts organisations, we acknowledge the announcement of the updates to Australia Council of the Arts' Four Year Funding program for 2021-2024 and underline the massive importance of small-to-medium organisations (SMEs) in contributing to a rich, robust and diverse cultural sector for many years to come.

Foremost, we wish to congratulate the 95 performing arts organisations that were successful in the application process, albeit this is down from 128 companies in 2016, especially the 28 companies new to Four Year funding.

Conversely, our support is with the smaller cultural organisations across Australia and particularly in Queensland that received transition funding only for 2021. For companies such as Australasian Dance Collective, Brisbane Writers Festival, Eyeline Publishing, Feral Arts and Umi Arts, this is devastating news and disappointing for arts and culture in our state.

We collaborate regularly with companies of this size and strongly believe ongoing public investment in arts and culture is crucial to ensure SMEs can deliver value to the community and connect artists and audiences. We anticipate the Australia Council's bolstered funding proposition will lead to even more collaboration and innovation in this space as SMEs provide critical pathways and platforms for arts and culture in Queensland.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has placed many sectors at risk of collapse. As we navigate our changed environment, arts, in particular, is certainly operating in a tumultuous climate for the foreseeable future. COVID-19 has resulted in the widespread cancellations of performances, festivals and events across Queensland, Australia and internationally, and with that, the loss of job stability, contracts and prospects. These measures will have a long-lasting impact on the performing arts sector and society as a whole.

As established arts organisations within Queensland, we recognise our responsibility towards ongoing advocacy for the sector. We are all in this together, as such it's more important than ever to remember the vital role arts and culture plays to connect and provide solace and diversion for Queenslanders during this lockdown phase.

Our industry is resilient and has a proud history of donating time and resources in unprecedented situations, from natural disasters to community-based needs. We look forward to rallying our collective creativity to entertain and inspire Queensland audiences again once this global crisis is under control.

The Australia Council announcement comes at the end of five years of federal government funding cuts to the arts. With the proposal of stimulus packages to address the massive impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, it's imperative to consider the needs of all arts institutions and individuals at this time regarding ongoing funding for the sustainable future of culture in this country.

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**CIRCA** **OQ** OPERA  
QUEENSLAND

Queensland  
**Ballet**



**QUEENSLAND  
THEATRE**