



31 JANUARY 2019

Australia Government – The Treasury
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Reference: 2019 -20 Pre Budget Submission

Regional Arts Australia (RAA) is pleased to present this submission to the Australian Government. The time is right for the arts and creative industries to take a lead role in regional development. The arts are a crucial element in the make-up of future liveable regions and are central to thriving and healthy communities and sustainable growth across regional, rural and remote Australia.

We believe that 25 million Australians are better off when the 8.8 million Australians who live outside of the metropolitan cities are creative, productive and thriving individuals and communities, contributing their unique perspectives to the national identity and making Australia a more culturally diverse nation.

We are advocating for informed policy development to sustain arts practice and cultural activities in regional communities through an increase in the Regional Arts Fund. This increase will deliver real short, medium and long-term benefits for artists, communities and the regions in which they work with measurable impacts across artistic, social, economic and health indexes.

We would be happy to discuss this submission and provide further information.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ros Abercrombie", written in a cursive style.

Ros Abercrombie
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Regional Arts Australia

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About Regional Arts Australia

Regional Arts Australia (RAA) is the longest continually-existing arts organisation of its kind in Australia and has served regional, remote and rural Australia for over 70 years. Founded in 1947 as the Arts Council of Australia, now trading as Regional Arts Australia, the organisation grew out of the Council for the Encouragement of Music (CEMA), founded in 1943 with the original aim of taking the arts to the people of regional Australia.

Today's organisation is a company limited by guarantee, a not for profit, national peak body that is positioned to increase understanding and appreciation for regional arts and creative industry across the three tiers of Government and to influence national regional arts policy reform.

Regional Arts Australia (RAA) champions artistic expression and furthers the issues, concerns, opportunities and common interests of Australian artists, arts organisations, audiences and communities working and practicing in regional, rural and remote Australia.

Our Purpose

We work to build strategic value to jurisdictions, the nation, to artists and the arts sector and advocate to bridge the gap between knowledge, debate and decision making for the potential and future pathways of regional Australia.

We support, develop, foster, advocate for and promote the practice, education and appreciation of the arts across regional Australia;

- RAA represents the combined voice of regional arts and culture and raises awareness of regional arts in the national context.
- RAA furthers the interests of regional artists, arts organisations, audiences and communities as a connector to stakeholders in government, corporate and philanthropic Australia and other supporters at a national regional level.
- RAA advocates for informed policy development to sustain healthy regional communities through arts and culture.
- RAA presents best practice and pursues equality of access to, and participation in cultural experiences for regional Australians.

We provide national reach and national impact to resource and promote regional arts and creative practice in collaboration with our members, the state-based Regional Arts Organisations and Regional Program Administrators.

RAA manages the Regional Arts Fund on behalf of the Australian Government.

Regional Arts Fund

The Regional Arts Fund (RAF) is one of the most successful cultural programs supporting arts and culture in regional and remote Australia. It is an extensive national program.

The objectives of the Fund are to support and promote participation in, and access to, Australia's arts and culture in regional and remote Australia by:

- encouraging and supporting sustainable economic, social and cultural development in regional communities;
- developing partnerships and networks which leverage financial and/or in-kind support for specific projects and encourage ongoing collaboration;
- developing audiences and broaden community engagement with the arts; and
- increasing employment and professional development opportunities for, and raising the profile of, regional and remote artists.

We submit that this is one of the most viable avenues for delivering a targeted arts program, devised by the needs of the State and Territories and delivered through robust and rigorous management from RAA. The Regional Arts Fund is a vital source of artistic and creative stimulus to regional communities, underpinning community wellbeing and liveability. The RAF program supports professional development and provides employment, leverages significant additional funds and reaches an extensive audience. All of the objectives of the fund are keyed closely to economic outcomes, leveraged income, community engagement, employment and professional development.

Value of the Fund

2008 the Regional Arts Fund (RAF) was valued at \$22Million across four years.

2012 the fund was half that of 2008 valued at \$12.54m over four years.

2012 – 2016 Regional Arts Fund supported;

- **1,458 Projects**
- **3,979,899 Participants**
- **3,105 Partnerships**
- **843 Professional Development Opportunities**
- **1,943 Artists and Arts workers received employment**
- **\$28,230,714 Leverage Income**

2016 – 2020

The fund is currently valued at \$13.853,000 over four years (2016 -2020)

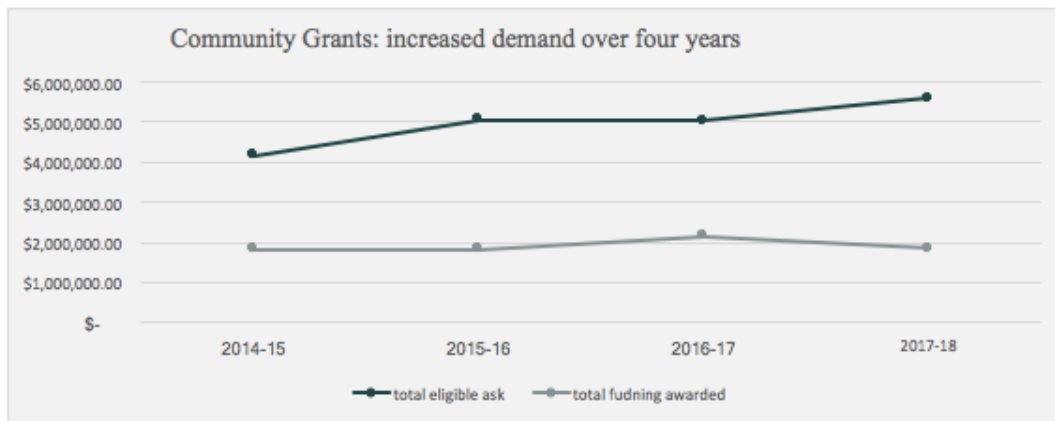
In 2017-18 the total annual funding was \$3,472,00 (including indexation)

Recommendation

We recommend the Regional Arts Fund be increased in value and restored to its pre 2010 value by lifting the total value of the fund to \$22.5 million over four years beginning in July 2020.

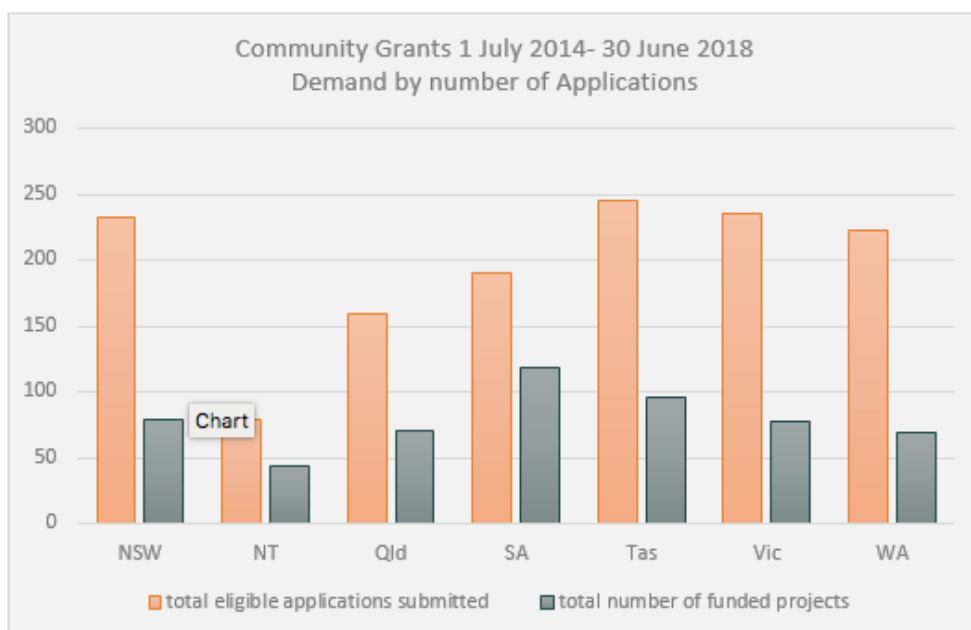
Our submission is based on feedback through Regional Arts Australia’s national survey and data from recent Regional Arts Fund rounds. These sources highlight the demand across states and territories.

Increase in Demand over four years



Demand per State:

	total eligible applications submitted	total number of funded projects	proportion
NSW	232	79	34%
NT	79	44	56%
QLD	159	71	45%
SA	190	118	62%
TAS	245	96	39%
VIC	236	78	33%
WA	222	69	31%
	1363	555	



Demand by Financial Year:

	total eligible applications received	total eligible ask	total no of funded projects	total funding awarded	proportion # projects	proportion \$ funding
2014-15	311	\$4,166,819.96	146	\$1,834,508.78	47%	44%
2015-16	360	\$5,060,246.67	143	\$1,838,861.40	40%	36%
2016-17	329	\$5,030,464.66	142	\$2,162,198.30	43%	43%
2017-18	363	\$5,584,338.92	124	\$1,844,404.75	34%	33%
	1363	\$19,841,870.21	555	\$7,679,973.23		

A substantial increase in funds would facilitate an expansion of the RAF program with financial support, professional networks and institutional connection across art forms, creative industries and geographic locations.

It would increase artistic and creative activity across regional, rural and remote Australia through a multi-artform, cross-industry and multi-location projects and professional development.

Key Priorities would include:

A national network of:

- Arts Projects
- Mentorships
- Fellowships
- Research Labs
- Training
- Professional Development
- Presenting Hubs

Increase greater inclusion of diverse cultures with a priority focus on:

- Indigenous / First Peoples
- Multicultural Communities
- Young people
- Aging Australians
- LGBTIQ
- Practitioners of all abilities

Demonstrate Outcomes:

- Attracting high quality arts practice across the country
- Encouraging and supporting best practice
- Raising the profile of regional and remote artists
- Commission, present, exhibit and publish new works
- Provide professional development for Artists and arts organisations
- Develop National and International relationships
- Connect and build cross industry partnerships, in health, education, tourism, jobs and growth
- Demonstrate capacity building within local communities and communities of creative practice.
- Present high level of return on investment

Summary of Recommendation

We recommend that the Regional Arts Fund be increased to \$22.5 million over four years. The deep cuts to the fund in the 2008 federal budget reducing it to \$11.8 million over four years have reduced the support and reach of the program. The demand for support for creative community activity is substantial. The number of unsuccessful funding applications for high quality cultural projects in regional Australia through the Regional Arts Fund approaches 70% in some jurisdictions.

For further information or to discuss the submission please contact Ros Abercrombie Executive Director Regional Arts Australia.

Submission Contact

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