

Canberra Artist Action Group

The Canberra Artist Action Group (CAAG) acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which the ACT region sits.

Who We Are?

CAAG formed in late 2016 as an artist community response to funding cuts in the ACT Government's 2017 Project Funding. It also was prompted due to the perceived lack of appropriate medium and long-term strategies to best serve the ACT Arts Community. In the 2016 Election campaign, ACT Labor recognised that Project Funding for the Arts has decreased over time, and was currently at a level which was causing artists to leave Canberra and for the city's artistic vibrancy to be compromised. Across 2017 CAAG has advocated through petitions, protest and discussion that arts funding needs to be directed to provide the best possible return on investment for ACT artists, organisations and the ACT community.

What We Propose?

We propose that the 2018-19 Budget includes the following:

- 1) That \$1.25million recurrent annual funding is allocated for the 2018-19 Project Funding round (and beyond), which meets the expectations of the ACT Arts Community following the 2016 Election.
- 2) That the ACT Government investigates the dollar-return on investment to the ANU, which makes up what we believe is over 15% of the total Arts Fund.
- 3) That \$100,000 of funding is allocated to establish and run an Advisory Board to the ACT Arts Minister.
- 4) That 20% of existing funding for arts activities run through ACT Government events (such as Floriade and Enlighten) be invested in ACT Artists.
- 5) That \$100,000 is allocated to small business incubation programs for ACT Artists, which meets the ACT Government's small business and employment objectives, from the ACT Small Business Budget.
- 6) That \$100,000 is allocated for Arts-based programs that support ACT Health outcomes, from the ACT Health Budget,

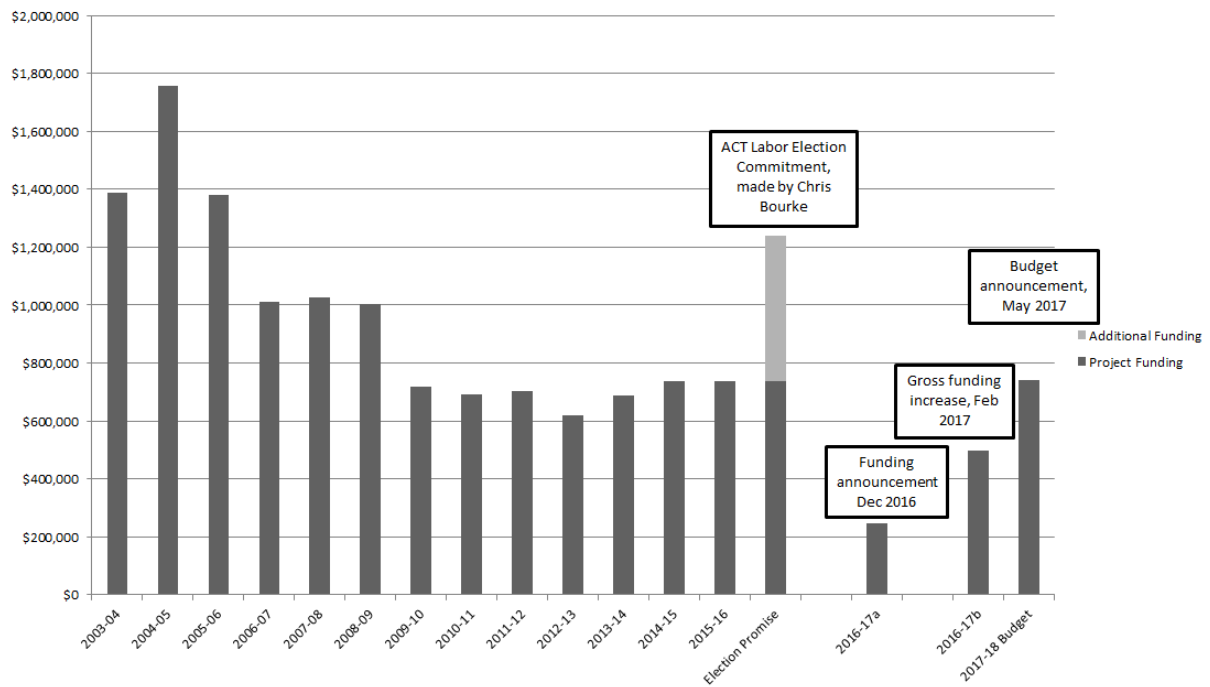
Why This Is Important?

The current ACT Government and Minister for the Arts has made some outstanding steps in addressing concerns about the current sustainability of ACT Arts Funding. However, we believe that the total quantum of Project Funding still falls below the level set between 2003-04 and 2005-06, which was identified as the level required to sustain a vibrant Arts ecology. We believe this reflects a lack of medium and long-term strategy for ACT Arts Funding overall. CAAG's proposed expenditure items have been set to provide clarity in address future demands of the arts ecology.

For example we are concerned that recent increases in funding to infrastructure, such as developments at Belconnen Arts Centre and the Canberra Theatre, have not been accompanied with increases in funding for artistic endeavour. We are particularly concerned that this will mean that the new or redeveloped infrastructure will sit empty for lack of artists funded to use these new spaces, ultimately rendering new infrastructure unhelpful.

The history of ACT Project Funding, as a point of example, is illustrated below:

ArtsACT Project Funding 2003-2017, adjusted for inflation



We would also like the ACT Government to consider the many attributes that the Arts can offer portfolios of Government, such as Tourism, Small Business, and Health. We propose that the 2018-19 Budget includes greater opportunities for Artists to provide their services to support non-Arts portfolios.

We believe that the ACT Government can increase its overall investment by directing a portion of funding for Major Events it already runs towards ACT Artists. Canberra is home to artists of a national and international standard, and their inclusion in Events such as Floriade and Enlighten is critical to ensuring that the rest of Australia and the world sees Canberra as part of that national and international community.

We believe that the reintroduction of a Small Business incubation scheme for Artists will provide significant benefits to the ACT Community. This meets an urgent need for Artists to develop the required business and marketing skills to become self-sustaining. Likewise, we believe that the ACT Government should reinstate highly successful Arts-Health programs previously funded under HealthPact, to promote health and well-being, self-esteem, and independence, enhancing the ACT Government’s investment in social inclusion.

We look forward to continuing constructive community engagement between Government and the arts community.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Sollis, Jennifer Martiniello and Kate Stewart
 On behalf of the Canberra Artist Action Group