

## **ArtsPeak responds to announcement of NPEA guidelines**

Twenty members of ArtsPeak (the confederation of national peak arts organisations) met last Friday with CEOs of the Australia Council and the federal Ministry for the Arts in Sydney to discuss the just released draft guidelines for the National Program for Excellence in the Arts (NPEA).

In providing their initial feedback on the guidelines, ArtsPeak members affirmed the importance of all political parties having evidence-based policies to underpin their initiatives in arts programming and funding.

They also called for research to be undertaken by the Government into the sustainability of the small to medium arts sector and its key role in the overall arts ecology. They asserted that with the shifting of \$110 million from the Australia Council to the NPEA, there was now insufficient funding to support the operations of the essential small to medium arts organisations and individual artists.

Nevertheless, they confirmed that they would be encouraging their constituents to respond to the draft guidelines to ensure that they will provide the best possible opportunities for artists, organisations and audiences across Australia.

“It is critical that all parts of the arts and cultural sector make submissions to the Ministry so that investments made through NPEA are effectively reticulated right across the diversity of the arts system,” said Tamara Winikoff, co-convenor of ArtsPeak.

“However, ArtsPeak believes that a new allocation of \$110 million to the Australia Council's budget would alleviate much of the concern in the sector as well as allowing the Australia Council's programs to complement the new fund.”

At its meeting earlier in the day, ArtsPeak discussed its own plans for the future and ways that the cultural sector could achieve greater unity and more effective collaboration.

The recent debate around the cuts to the Australia Council budget and the introduction of NPEA has underlined the need for an active and articulate umbrella advocacy body to pursue the need for long-term policy planning and broad strategic issues pertaining to the development of the cultural and creative industries in Australia.

ArtsPeak is looking at how it might develop and broaden its structure to meet these needs by joining with sectors such as design, architecture, fashion and film as well as the education institutions that are engaging future generations in cultural learning.

### **For media comment please contact ArtsPeak co-convenor:**

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