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Media release

Major changes flagged in arts budget, although total share retained

Significant structural changes for arts funding have been announced in this year's Federal budget, while the total funding allocation has been increased in 2015–16.

'This is welcome news in a time of government fiscal restraint. However, we are concerned that arts funding falls significantly in the following three years,' said Ms Bethwyn Serow, Executive Director of AMPAG.

'We note the funding of the new National Programme for Excellence in the Arts is flagged to support endowments, international touring and strategic projects with an emphasis on private sector support.

'The partnership between private sector, government and audience support is critical to the arts—but there is still a lot we don't know about this program. We wait with interest to see how the funds will be allocated,' she said.

The budget has also flagged efficiency dividends which will impact on the arts and Ms Serow noted that how they are achieved could have important ramifications for the arts ecology that need to be better understood.

She welcomed federal funding for the major performing arts companies which has been preserved at current levels.

'This commitment is critical to their ongoing sustainability and their capacity to produce large scale work, engage audiences and provide ongoing professional development and employment pathways for artists and creatives.'

She noted the effective doubling of the Major Festivals Initiative will support commissioning of more new Australian work, enabling it to be seen across the country.

AMPAG also welcomed the three-year project funding for Creative Partnerships Australia, although observing that it was from redirected funding from the Australia Council.

'This commitment from the government strengthens the partnerships between private donors, corporate sponsors, government and the general public through box office revenue.'

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