

MEDIA STATEMENT

Australia Council hails big wins for the arts in Budget

The Australia Council for the Arts today welcomed the announcement of several significant initiatives in the 2007-08 Budget.

Kathy Keele, chief executive officer of the Australia Council, said that last night's Budget contained great news for the arts community.

'The Australia Council warmly welcomes the very positive outcomes for the arts in this Budget,' Ms Keele said.

'Budget allocations for large and small performing arts companies, and for the visual arts sector, will help our outstanding artists take more art to more Australians.

'A \$24.1 million funding boost over four years for 20 of our major performing arts companies will help develop more artists, commission more work and increase access for all Australians, particularly young people.

'Another initiative will see an extra \$19.5 million over four years flow to many of the small to medium performing arts companies, which are the creative powerhouse of the arts in Australia and overseas.

'The visual arts sector also received welcome news with the renewal of \$24.7 million in funding over the next four years through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy.

'This is on top of other initiatives announced in the Budget, including funds for Australia on the World Stage touring initiative, the Indigenous Cultural Property Program, the Australian Ballet School and the National Portrait Gallery.

'Alongside the rest of the cultural sector, we look forward to these budget allocations helping Australian artists create more world-class work and more Australians to be enriched by cultural activity,' Ms Keele said.

Media enquiries – Stephen Mahoney, director of marketing and communication, 02 9215 9032, 0403 090 022 or s.mahoney@ozco.gov.au