

PROPERLY VALUING THE ARTS

INTRODUCTION

Art makes life better - it gives us a sense of voice, place, collective identity and culture. It makes sense of the chaos.

Canberrans know we need art. We [spend more time and money per capita on the arts than any other Australian city](#), and in 2019 nearly [half](#) of us participated in artistic creation in some form.

What did we do during and after the fires, while getting our first real taste of climate change impacts? How have we survived the isolation, job losses and surging mental health challenges caused by COVID-19? Many of us have turned to art, culture and music. It makes sense of the chaos. It helps us celebrate the good things and process the bad ones. It gives meaning to our experiences. It helps us get through.

That's why the Greens will properly value the arts.

While more and more of us are turning to the arts, the sector has been devastated by COVID-19 restrictions. In November 2019, [Arts and Recreation employed 4,700 people in the ACT. This dropped to 3,400 by February 2020](#) and we know that the figure has dropped significantly further in the past six months as a result of COVID impacts.

Most artists in Canberra have lost the majority of their income, which [many already struggled to live on](#), and many have been unable to access Jobkeeper and other Federal Government support packages. We know that many artists work in the gig economy and in the retail and hospitality sector to supplement their income, but these sectors too have [seen very high rates of jobs and working hours lost](#).

Venues that have remained open, or re-opened have had to implement strict restrictions on the number of patrons allowed, have had to significantly adapt their performance offerings and have reduced revenue as a result. Many of the secondary sources of income from those venues and performances have failed.

But this is not just about COVID-19. We all know that for decades, artists have been chronically underpaid or expected to work for free in order to 'get a foot in the door', and music venues have not received the support that they need to remain viable in an urbanising city.

Unfortunately young people that study arts or music at our excellent tertiary institutions in Canberra very often leave Canberra due to the lack of employment opportunities in the sector here. This creative drain has a long-lasting impact on Canberra, our community and our economy.

THAT'S WHY THE ACT GREENS WILL PROPERLY VALUE THE ARTS, TO SUPPORT OUR CREATIVE COMMUNITY, BY:

1. Delivering **short term solutions to assist COVID recovery** for a seriously impacted sector:
 - a. **Extend rent relief / payroll tax exemptions** to artists and arts organisations throughout COVID
 - b. **A \$1 million extension of the Homefront grants program** and/or development of an associated short-term funding program
 - c. **More support for artists to perform outside traditional venues**, by making community halls, facilities and public unleased lands, like local parks simple to hire and fee-free
2. **Creating local creative and arts jobs** and supporting stable and secure employment of artists:
 - a. **Trial a three year Canberra Creative Industries funding certainty program for 100 local, professional artists** to produce original works and engage the community with art, in long term residencies and commissioned community-led art projects
 - b. **Pay the artist first and fairly**, not last and under the poverty line. We will ensure all government funding that incorporates an arts element pays professional practising artists first, before others in line get paid
 - c. **More promotion of local artists** - promoting ACT artists, musicians and performers across Australia
 - d. Require a **minimum local content** at government-funded festivals, events and arts programs to build our local arts industry
 - e. As part of our Gender-Led Recovery Package institute a **"Women's Walk" of artwork by, for and about women at the new West Basin precinct**
3. Providing **targeted support for arts organisations** and sectors
 - a. Ensure that **funding for Key Arts Organisations** in the ACT is adequate and appropriate by reviewing the current funding model
 - b. Ensure that a **proportion of all arts funding is reserved for the generation of First Nations arts and culture** by setting clear targets for overall allocation of government grants. The proportion should be developed in partnership with First Nations groups such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the Yuarana Centre and other First Nations cultural arts groups

4. Supporting **arts-friendly infrastructure** and venues
 - a. **Create entertainment precincts** with different noise restrictions and regulations, to create vibrant hubs of music, art and food and implement the **Entertainment Action Plan**
 - b. Support **pokie-free community clubs transition to be live music venues** and community event hubs by providing infrastructure grants to open up their spaces to community use such as concerts and performances
 - c. Develop a separate fund to support arts organisations to **maintain their venues** in accordance with health and safety requirements and maintain heritage features where they apply.

1. DELIVER SHORT TERM SOLUTIONS TO ASSIST COVID RECOVERY FOR A SERIOUSLY IMPACTED SECTOR

A. EXTEND RENT RELIEF / PAYROLL TAX EXEMPTIONS TO ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANISATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COVID PERIOD OF FINANCIAL IMPACT

The ACT Government has provided payroll tax waivers and rent relief to employers in COVID impacted businesses, including art and entertainment. However, this only currently extends to September 2020. The Greens believe that more support is needed for businesses doing it tough, particularly for those in the arts and entertainment sectors. We will extend the current rent relief provisions and payroll tax waivers throughout the COVID pandemic period and while finances return to stable patterns.

B. \$1 MILLION EXTENSION OF THE HOMEFRONT GRANTS PROGRAM AND/OR DEVELOPMENT OF AN ASSOCIATED SHORT TERM FUNDING PROGRAM

The Homefront grants provided some immediate relief for individual artists, and 59 were provided with funding in August 2020. However, there were 370 applicants, which clearly shows considerable demand for more financial support for the many artists in our community. The Greens will boost this funding to allow for an additional 2 rounds in the next 12 months.

C. MORE SUPPORT FOR ARTISTS TO PERFORM OUTSIDE TRADITIONAL VENUES, BY MAKING COMMUNITY HALLS, FACILITIES AND PUBLIC UNLEASED LANDS, LIKE LOCAL PARKS, SIMPLE TO HIRE AND FEE-FREE.

A key way the Government can support emerging artists is to provide access to spaces for artistic use for free. This will reduce young, part-time, or experimental artists' reliance on venues that need to sell alcohol to support art performances. The Greens will waive venue hire, and event approval fees and expedite booking and approval processes for small, free and/or unticketed local events such as outdoor album launch listening events, poetry recitals, daytime amplified dance parties, roving dance or circus performances.

2. CREATE LOCAL CREATIVE AND ARTS JOBS AND SUPPORT STABLE AND SECURE EMPLOYMENT OF ARTISTS

A. TRIAL A THREE YEAR CANBERRA CREATIVE INDUSTRIES FUNDING CERTAINTY PROGRAM FOR 100 LOCAL, PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS

Various public and private business models exist for artists outside the gig economy, including standing orchestras, theatre companies, movie production companies, artistic director positions and designers. But the overall trend has moved towards gig and freelance work for artists in sectors particularly affected by COVID.

Whilst COVID response money has supported the arts community to an extent, much of the funds have gone to small, one-off projects that once complete, provide no longer-term certainty or income for the artist.

We will run a funded three year trial creating long-term project and contract work for 100 professional artists from diverse backgrounds across a range of mediums. Key arts organisations and artists in the ACT will be consulted through the design process for this initiative in early 2021 that will lead to stable, secure work and better pay and conditions for 100 artists to 2024.

Artists in the ACT will be eligible to apply for these positions in a merits based process in line with the existing artsACT peer assessment process. They will be paid a stable, secure fee (\$52,400p/a plus super + leave: total cost for 3 years = approx \$24.6 million including all on-costs).

These artists will **develop works in long-term residencies** in our schools, arts centres, public institutions and the community sector, and will engage the community in the arts particularly through **community-led artworks about issues determined by the community under neighbourhood democracy processes**.

Art is a vital reflection of the values and attitudes of our society. Commissioned works and residencies will provide an opportunity for artists to explore contemporary and topical issues and commentary that can help shape public dialogue and conversations on issues affecting our community. They also allow time and space for artists to explore and collaborate across artforms and encourage art that may not otherwise be made.

This program will provide stable opportunities for creatives to explore themes affecting the broader community, like climate change, mental health, the grief of living in a natural world under siege by modern life, or the challenges of urban development. These residencies will be targeted to provide therapeutic benefits to the community. Artists will work with the community to design and agree on public artworks, as part of the neighbourhood democracy package so that the end results are treasured by the community.

The program will reserve 10 percent of places for designated Indigenous artist positions. A further 10 percent will be reserved for artists with disability and multicultural artists.

The 100 places in the three year trial will be divided into allocations for various artforms and media so that there is an opportunity for all artforms to be properly valued.

Works produced will be able to be exhibited, performed and sold by the ACT Government to the public in **existing galleries and public spaces for ACT** artists retained by the ACTPS, with a view to partially offsetting the costs of the program, and increasing exposure for artists. Intellectual property will be owned by the artists, who will be credited for the works when displayed and sold.

B. PAY THE ARTIST FIRST AND FAIRLY, NOT LAST AND UNDER THE POVERTY LINE. WE WILL ENSURE ALL GOVERNMENT FUNDING THAT INCORPORATES AN ARTS ELEMENT PAYS PROFESSIONAL PRACTISING ARTISTS FIRST, BEFORE OTHERS IN LINE GET PAID.

We will ensure all government funding that incorporates an arts element pays the artist first, not the plumber, the sparkie or the events manager. All too often, the artist is expected to perform for low fees, or for free on the promise of exposure or experience. Often this is because priority has been given to all the other costs involved in staging the artwork. We must respect our artists more, by paying them as a priority. It's that simple.

In order to ensure this is happening, we will require government agencies that fund artworks to report on how many artists and performers worked on agency projects, how many hours of arts and performance work were done and how much the artists and performers were paid.

C. MORE PROMOTION OF LOCAL ARTISTS - PROMOTING ACT ARTISTS, MUSICIANS AND PERFORMERS ACROSS AUSTRALIA

We should use our CBR brand and Visit CBR brands to support our local artists through ACT Government promotion of the high quality of the ACT arts sector.

D. REQUIRE MINIMUM LOCAL CONTENT TARGETS AT GOVERNMENT-FUNDED FESTIVALS, EVENTS AND ARTS PROGRAMS TO BUILD OUR LOCAL ARTS INDUSTRY.

Travel restrictions and other impacts of COVID have shown us that we need to support and nurture the existing and emerging creative talent in our local arts sector. This will ensure our own wellbeing as a community and generate revenue into our local economy. The Greens have been fighting for this for some time, and want the ACT Government to set a minimum level of local content for all events facilitated by EventsACT to ensure that Canberra-based artists and producers actually benefit from government investments in events.

The government does spend a substantial amount of money on events that are great for local residents and also great from a tourism point of view. But - especially with COVID impacts, there is no reason why much of the artistic programming cannot be local - for example, we don't understand why an event like [Canberra Day would only have 50% of its performers from the ACT](#). We would like to see the government set targets for a minimum level of local content so that the benefits from these events are long lasting within the community.

E. AS PART OF OUR GENDER-LED RECOVERY PACKAGE, INSTITUTE A “WOMEN’S WALK” OF ARTWORK BY, FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN AT THE NEW WEST BASIN PRECINCT.

Women have a higher cultural participation rate than men (37% compared with 25%), yet are less represented in public art. Only [16% of ACT Government public sculpture works](#) have been created by women artists, and 19% of sculptures depicting a person are of a female form compared to 51% depicting male form.

The Greens will explore how we can institute a Women’s Walk in the West Basin precinct to recognise and honour the women who have made Canberra the city it is today. Public artworks will depict Canberra women, created by Canberra women artists, and will be accessible to all Canberrans.

3. PROVIDE TARGETED SUPPORT FOR ARTS ORGANISATIONS AND SECTORS.

A. ENSURE THAT FUNDING FOR KEY ARTS ORGANISATIONS IN THE ACT ARE ADEQUATELY FUNDED AND CONSULTED ON ACT ARTS POLICY BY REVIEWING THE CURRENT FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE MODEL.

The ACT Greens value the Key Arts Organisations in the ACT that play a vital role in providing ongoing sector development, career pathways for artists and arts workers, and support a diversity of activity and access opportunities for the ACT community. We will review the current funding model in consultation with the sector and ensure that funding is appropriate, adequate and reliable.

B. ENSURE THAT A PROPORTION OF ALL ARTS FUNDING IS RESERVED FOR THE GENERATION OF FIRST NATIONS ARTS AND CULTURE.

The Greens believe that First Nations arts and culture make a vital and continuing contribution to the cultural fabric of the ACT. We must listen to First Nations stories and experiences to truly move towards reconciliation. First Nations arts are central to understanding who we are as Australians. That means supporting First Nations artists, storytellers and performers. Connecting to culture will also have many flow on effects for the wellbeing of younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Greens will work with key First Nations groups such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the Yuarana Centre and other cultural arts groups to determine the exact proportion of overall arts funding provided by ACT Government that should be reserved and made available for the generation of First Nations arts and culture. Progress on this indicator will be included as part of the reporting from ArtsACT.

4. SUPPORT ARTS FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE AND VENUES

A. CREATE ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCTS WITH MORE APPROPRIATE NOISE RESTRICTIONS AND REGULATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL MIXED USE AREAS TO CREATE VIBRANT HUBS OF MUSIC, ART AND FOOD AND IMPLEMENT THE ENTERTAINMENT ACTION PLAN

The ACT Greens have been pushing for the creation of designated entertainment precincts for over a decade. The ACT's outdated planning approach and noise limits have stifled music venues, and sadly many iconic venues have closed before their time due to noise complaints. There have been numerous Assembly motions and Government reports, but still no concrete action. Now, with the devastating impact of COVID on the events sector, our venues need our support more than ever.

The ACT Greens will change the Territory Plan and noise regulations to allow for the designation of 'Entertainment Precincts', starting with the City Entertainment Precinct (including the Sydney Building, Garema Place, City Walk up to the Canberra Times Fountain, Bunda Street, and the neighbouring part of London Circuit). We will set more flexible noise limits, and will require new residential developments to meet minimum sound attenuation standards, including sound attenuating windows, as well as informing all prospective buyers and occupants of the vibrant nightlife that is actively encouraged to flourish around them.

The Greens will republish the Entertainment Action Plan with new and concrete timelines for action against the plan.

B. SUPPORT POKIE-FREE COMMUNITY CLUBS TRANSITION TO BE LIVE MUSIC VENUES THROUGH THE COVID PERIOD AND BEYOND BY PROVIDING SUBSIDIES, GRANTS THAT SUPPORT LOCAL ARTISTS AND OPEN UP THEIR SPACES TO COMMUNITY USE.

Canberra's artists and musicians have repeatedly let us know that there is a need for new venues to showcase their talents. Music ACT have been calling for action to reverse the decline in ACT live music venues for over a decade now - the Greens believe that community clubs could be part of the solution to this problem.

As live music venues struggle to hold events with enough patrons to break even during times of COVID, the Greens will support pokie-free community clubs with grants for acoustic attenuation measures for concert and performance halls, to help reduce the sound impacts in the neighbourhood and to cover other costs of installing sound production infrastructure, including staging and lighting and will cover the cost of Music Australia performance fees for live music.

C. A SCHEME TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, MUSICIANS AND PERFORMERS TO USE CLUB SPACES

We know there are community groups in Canberra looking for safe and functional spaces for their meetings and functions. We also understand that there is underutilised capacity in many existing community clubs. The facilities available in our clubs across the ACT include halls, kitchens, meeting rooms, and family play rooms. We want to help clubs and local groups make better use of these amenities to bring people together.

The ACT Greens will investigate the introduction of a funded government program for pokie-free clubs to become venues of choice for community venue hire/ Government promotion - eg. community access to halls and club kitchens. This work will take into account issues and costs of public liability insurance, equitable access for interested groups, and the most effective forms of Government support for the measure. Specific measures in the scheme could include:

- i. Government fees and rates subsidies and concessions for clubs hosting live music
- ii. A government support unit tasked with assisting clubs that wish to go pokie-free, connecting them with community arts and music groups like Music ACT

D. SUPPORT ARTS ORGANISATIONS TO MAINTAIN THEIR VENUES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND MAINTAIN HERITAGE FEATURES WHERE THEY APPLY, AND BUDGETING FOR THESE WORKS SEPARATELY FROM ARTS FUNDS

Arts organisations tell us that some of their venues are becoming tired and in need of maintenance. There is a need to constantly upgrade facilities so that they remain safe from hazards such as fire. Additionally, some such as Gorman House are heritage listed, and need additional maintenance attention to protect their heritage values. The Greens will ensure that there is a separate budget for these works, so that they do not detract from funding for artists and producers.