



Australian Government



**MAJOR PERFORMING ARTS BOARD**  
INFORMATION FOR COMPANIES  
14 JULY 2005

Dear Colleagues:

The Major Performing Arts Board (MPAB) of the Australia Council met in Melbourne on Friday 24 June.

Issues discussed included:

**Sydney Dance Company:**

The MPAB discussed arrangements that had been put in place to ensure that Sydney Dance Company could fulfill its performance and touring commitments in 2005 and 2006, through the provision of grants in advance to the company. The Board discussed a report on the company's finances undertaken by Mr Ian McRae in late 2004, and noted the valuable analysis contained in that report, which would be used as a basis of a further examination of options for the company's financial stability, while protecting the company's high artistic standards. The Board noted that the MPAB and the Board of Sydney Dance Company would be working closely together over the next few months to facilitate this examination. The success of the company's latest production, *Grand*, created by the Artistic Director of the company, Graeme Murphy, was also discussed.

**Orchestras Review 2005**

The Director of the MPAB, Cathy Brown-Watt, informed the Board that the MPAB had been asked by the Australian Government to implement its approved recommendations of the Orchestras Review 2005. The MPAB, working in conjunction with the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Implementation would begin implementation on 1 July 2005.

**Future role of the MPAB**

The Board discussed its future strategic directions, noting that 2004 was the final year of implementation of the CMC-approved recommendations of the 1999 Major Performing Arts Inquiry (MPAI). The Board noted that 80 of the recommendations had been implemented, with eight recommendations continuing to be actioned in 2005 and two outstanding for action as part of the implementation of the Orchestras Review 2005.

The Board was informed that MPAB staff had undertaken an evaluation of the impact of each recommendation that had been implemented. This process had identified three categories of recommendations:

- Recommendations that have been implemented and have achieved their intended outcomes;
- Recommendations that have been implemented, but have not fully achieved their intended outcomes, and
- Recommendations that require further research and/or discussion to determine whether their intended outcomes have been or can be achieved, and whether they should be pursued further.

In summary, the evaluation indicated that the implementation process had succeeded in improving the companies' funding arrangements and significantly changing their business practices, with a resulting strengthening of the sector's financial position. It had also resulted in improved access and artistic vibrancy for the sector. However, the evaluation had highlighted that further work needed to be done in areas such as benchmarking companies activities and results nationally and internationally, strengthening ties between MPAB companies and other companies in their artform, effective dissemination of best practice information across the sector, and provision of capacity building initiatives to address the sector's changing needs into the future.

The MPAB will discuss a more detailed analysis of its future directions, together with a broad prioritising of goals and an implementation timetable at its meeting in Adelaide in September.

#### **Review of MPAI Funding Model**

Research has begun as a basis for the second review of the MPAI Funding Model, using the companies 2004 results. The review will be discussed at the Cultural Ministers Council meeting in August. It is expected that the Review will be completed by the end of 2005.

#### **MPAB companies' financial results for 2004**

(Wayne to provide one paragraph summary/overview of sector)

#### **Grants**

The Board endorsed nine project grant decisions made by Flying Minute since the March 2005 MPAB meeting. It received a summary of project grants for the 2004-2005 financial year, which comprised: Strategic Partnership Grants to Queensland Theatre Company, Musica Viva Australia and Company B Ltd; International Activity Grants to Circus Oz, Sydney Theatre Company, Playbox Theatre Company, State Opera of South Australia, Melbourne Theatre Company and The Australian Ballet; and Young and Emerging Artist Grants to the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Opera Australia, Queensland Theatre Company and The Australian Ballet.

#### **Philanthropy training 2005**

The Board received a report summarising Philanthropy training activities in companies in 2005, as one of the final MPAI recommendation implementations. It noted that Philanthropy seminars had been presented in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth

in March and April, and that the participants overwhelmingly gave high ratings for content and presentation, with a total 94% of attendees rating the presentations as good or excellent. The Philanthropy training continues throughout 2005 with philanthropy audits being offered to MPAB companies that wish to assess their current philanthropy capabilities, and opportunities for the future. A pilot Philanthropy mentoring program, presented in conjunction with Artsupport Australia, is also underway.

#### **eMarketing Summit 2005**

The Board received a report on the eMarketing Summit, a joint presentation of the MPAB and the Audience and Market Development Division of the Australia Council, which was held in Adelaide on 26 and 27 May. The Summit was attended by a total 74 delegates, of whom 34 were from MPAB companies and the balance from the medium performing arts sector, arts centres, Festivals and State funding agencies. Topics discussed at the eSummit included website design and development for optimum sales and promotions, email marketing, optimising websites for internet ticketing, electronic recruitment and acquisition, creativity and copy on line and tracking online marketing results. A participant survey conducted at the conclusion of the Summit demonstrated that 88% of delegates rated the overall quality of presentations as very good or excellent; and 94% of delegates rated organisation of the event as very good or excellent.

#### **New Work with Festivals program**

The Board noted that significant funds were still available under the New Work with Festival (NWwF) initiative resulting from MPAI Recommendation 10.1.3, which states:

*“Companies, particularly those designated as Niche and Regional Flagship companies, should be encouraged to work with festivals to showcase new and innovative Australian works that are well developed and, within a festival’s overall programming mix, meet its needs for rare artistic product. The goal of such collaboration should be to give Australian product the best chance of selection for the international festival circuit. Funding initiatives should encourage such collaboration.”*

The Board discussed the current guidelines that limited access to NWwF funding to Specialist and State Flagship companies and noted that under this arrangement only one application for NWwF had been submitted, and that it had been successful.

The Board was informed that in July 2004 the MPAB approached Sue Natrass, the Chair of the Confederation of Australian Arts Festivals, to ask the advice of the Confederation on the best course of action to use this funding effectively. Ms Natrass advised that the matter had been discussed by the Confederation, which believed that successful projects could be developed under the NWwF program if the participating companies were not limited to Specialist and State Flagships.

After further discussion of this matter, the MPAB agreed to extend the eligibility of New Work with Festivals funding to all member companies of the Major Performing Arts Board, effective immediately.