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A million dollar commitment to artists with disability

The Australia Council for the Arts has announced a million dollars in dedicated funding for artists with disability over the next three years.

Australia Council Chief Executive Officer Tony Grybowski made the announcement today at the Arts Activated Conference in Chatswood, Sydney.

Mr Grybowski said the decision to extend the dedicated arts and disability funding was made after a successful pilot was run earlier this year.

“Last December on the International Day of People with Disability I announced three initiatives - the Artists with Disability Pilot Program; the Council’s Disability Action Plan for 2014-2016; and additional funding for Arts Access Australia to increase career development and employment opportunities for artists with disability,” Mr Grybowski said.

“The initiative provided \$300,000 in dedicated funding during 2014 to enable Australian artists with disability to create, develop, present, produce, exhibit and tour their work.

“The pilot program confirmed there is a rich pool of talent in this area, and that is why we have extended the program for three years. This million dollar investment in arts and disability over 2015-2017 will provide development grants of up to \$25,000 and project grants of up to \$50,000 for individuals and groups.”

The Australia Council’s recently launched five-year Strategic Plan sets out the Council’s priorities to achieve its aspirations for Australia to be a culturally ambitious nation. The Council’s new strategic goals include a focus on Australia’s reputation for great art and artists, and the arts enriching daily life for all.

Mr Grybowski said the dedicated arts and disability funding was identified as a strategic initiative under this new plan and that it would play an important role in the realisation of those goals.

“The extension of the dedicated arts and disability funding will allow individual artists with disability and disability-led groups to apply through the Australia Council’s new streamlined grants model. The new grants program begins in January 2015 with the first round of applications closing in March,” Mr Grybowski said.

The pilot program was established after extensive consultation with the sector and applications opened in early 2014. Individuals and groups who identified as having disability submitted just over 200 applications in all art form areas from across Australia, including from artists who had never previously applied to the Council, demonstrating a high demand for dedicated funding.

Twenty five projects and development opportunities for artists with disability were funded through this pilot program.

“The extension of this dedicated funding demonstrates our commitment to supporting the cultural ambitions of artists with disability, and to seeing more artists who identify as having disability applying across our funding programs,” Mr Grybowski said.

For more information on dedicated arts and disability funding: <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/funding/new-grants-model/>

Media contact

Karen Smith
02 9215 9030 | 0498 123 541
k.smith@australiacouncil.gov.au

 twitter.com/auscouncilarts

 facebook.com/australiacouncil