

**SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL  
AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

Impact of the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Budget decisions on the Arts

**PUBLIC HEARING Wednesday 5 August 2015**

**Speech delivered by Merryn Carter, representing PATA**

The Performing Arts Touring Alliance represents producing companies, presenters, venue managers and tour coordinators who provide communities in regional, remote, outer metropolitan and suburban Australia, as well as capital cities, with a wealth of performing arts experiences.

Many children in regional Australia owe their first live theatre, dance, or music experience to this touring activity.

Which performing arts companies provide these highly valued experiences? Senator Brandis has given the impression it's the major companies, those whose funding he's insulated from the cuts to the Australia Council's budget.

Presenters budgets and programming aspirations for their audiences dictate a range of product is offered, and the majors play a valued part in this, however, Playing Australia grants from May 2013 to September 2014 show that from a total of 44 applications funded, 32 or 73% of those tours were by **small to medium** companies.

A look at the program of any typical regional performing arts centre across Australia shows that most touring performances are small to medium companies and individual artists, not the majors.

It's these small to medium companies who are most endangered by the 2015 Budget cuts to the Australia Council. While the NPEA may provide some project funding for these companies, the draft guidelines ordinarily rule out funding core costs. The Australia Council will struggle to fund the current number and range of these companies with its reduced budget allocation. Building and managing tours is time-intensive, specialist work, requiring ongoing staff resources to allow companies to plan and commit in advance, then deliver a successful tour.

Do we really want to risk regional communities losing access to performing arts experiences like this?

What about international touring? Isn't that, at least, dominated by the majors as the Minister assumes?

Figures for international touring 2010 to 2014 show Australian companies performed to over 2.5 million audience members overseas<sup>1</sup>. Of those, over 2.1 million or 82% enjoyed the work of Australian **small to medium** companies. Major companies

accounted for 18% of the total international audience for touring Australian performing arts companies.

So it's our small to medium companies that deliver the majority of performing arts touring for both national and international audiences.

PATA considers the impact of the 2015 Budget cuts will damage small to medium companies' ability to continue to play such an important role in touring. In turn, it's the regional communities and audiences of tomorrow that will suffer.

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**All international attendances 2010 - 2014, compiled from company annual reports**

Major Performing Arts companies	463,219	18%
Small-to-medium key organisations	2,111,958	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,575,177</b>	

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