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9 April 2020

Australia Council says 'simply not enough money' for it to fund Australian Design Centre

Australian Design Centre congratulates the 95 organisations awarded Four Year Funding for Organisations for 2021-24 by the Australia Council for the Arts.

We were among 162 organisations shortlisted in the first round and invited to make a full application. We were unsuccessful. When we asked the question why, we were told that despite our excellent track record over the past four years and despite our excellent application and vision for the next four years, there was 'simply not enough money'.

There was not enough money in 2016 when George Brandis raided the Council and there is still not enough money. Arts and culture matter so little to this Government that they have not seen fit to adequately fund the Australia Council to enable it to effectively support the artists and arts organisations who create and enrich our culture.

We have, however, received Visual Arts and Craft Strategy funding from 2021 to 2024 and we thank the Australian Government and state governments for their important long term collaboration on this program, although we have experienced a 30% reduction to this on pre-2016 levels. We also acknowledge the Federal Government's generic financial assistance available for small organisations. This will help us somewhat to cope with the COVID-19 downturn but we note that there is still no sustainable package for the creative sector which contributes \$111.7 billion annually to Australia's GDP.

In 2016 we were one of the many organisations that lost multi-year funding. We have weathered this for the past four years consistently demonstrating excellence evidenced by the more than 25 project grants totalling almost \$1.6 million from three levels of government (including the Australia Council) and philanthropic funds. We have increased our non-government self-generated revenue and supported over 4000 artists. Multi-year funding is essential core support that underpins our operations and enables this funded project work – without multi-year funding that work is now in jeopardy.

Thank you to all those artists – craftspeople and designers – and organisations which we have partnered with to deliver our programs over the past four years and to all of the donors, supporters and people who participated in events, enjoyed exhibitions and purchased artists' work through us for their homes and collections. Together we have done excellent work.

It is shameful that the Australia Council is unable to fund a craft and design organisation in New South Wales because there is 'simply not enough money'.

Funding the level of 'unfunded excellence' in successful organisations like Australian Design Centre is a small investment. The Federal Government needs to address this urgently before our sector collapses, our culture suffers and more employment opportunities for artists and arts workers are lost.

If you want to help us make our case to the Australia Council and the Federal Government for this decision to be reversed please email lisa@australiandesigncentre.com and we will pass your views onto the Australia Council and the Minister for the Arts.

Read our letters sent to the [Minister](#) and to the [Australia Council](#) on 8 April 2020.

In the meantime I hope that you and your families have a restful few days over this Easter break and stay well.

Lisa Cahill
CEO and Artistic Director

[Read more](#)

About ADC



Make change with us

Australian Design Centre has been a pivotal part of the craft scene in Sydney (as the NSW Crafts Council and Object Gallery) since 1964. Collaboration and touring have been integral to our programs throughout our 55-year history.

Our exhibitions, workshops and activities offer a space for designers and makers to experiment, test new ideas and push the boundaries of innovation in design and contemporary craft. We will continue to grow creative practice in craft and design, grow national and international opportunities for artists, and particularly Indigenous artists, and collaborate with audiences to involve them in cultural activities that enrich their lives.

With your help we can continue to inspire, inform and engage people with the power of creativity.

[Donate today](#)

About Australian Design Centre

Established in 1964, ADC is a not-for-profit organisation

that creates opportunities for people to engage with design, craft and creativity through dynamic and high-quality touring exhibitions, publishing, digital and educational activities.

ADC's mission is to ignite creativity and innovative ideas through:

Exhibitions – Showcasing the best making and design by Australian creators.

Touring – Bringing the power of making and design to new audiences across Australia.

Learning – Inspiring Australians to use design to transform their future.



Australian Design Centre is supported by the generosity of our partners and donors, the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments, the New South Wales Government through Create NSW, the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and the City of Sydney. Australian Design Centre is a member of Australian Craft and Design Centres network and the Sydney Culture Network.

Australian Design Centre is proud to be a creative place located on Gadigal Land.

We acknowledge with respect the traditional owners the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation.

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