



Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

Asked by Ms Jo Clay MLA on 21 November 2023: Ms Fulton took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard uncorrected proof transcript 21 November 2023 pp 19–20

In relation to: Theatres able to operate at a loss

MS CLAY: Yes. Great. So PAC Australia, they run national figures, and under their national figures, they say that about 80 per cent of theatres are able to program at a loss. And what they mean by that is in Australia, 80 per cent of our theatres do not have to return a surplus or break even. They are able to do their artistic programming based on the fact that they will be subsidised, that they will not be breaking even. I am just wondering; can you tell me about the breakdown in Canberra. Do we have 80 per cent of our theatres that are able to run at a loss because they are being subsidised?

Ms Fulton: I do not know the answer to that question, and I would probably have to go out to each of our organisations to get that information.

MS CLAY: Can you take it on notice, and if the question comes back on notice, “We do not keep that information”, that is an answer?

Ms Fulton: Yes. I will take on notice.

MS CLAY: I will tell you the information that I am interested in, because there might be another way that you can answer the question.

Ms Fulton: Yes.

MS CLAY: I guess I am interested in the ACT, if whether we think about 80 per cent of our theatres are also able to program artistically, and not worry about ticket sales covering the full cost of the event, or whether we are out of step with that national figure. And I do not know, if you do not keep that data, if maybe you might be able to ask PAC if they have that data? Because a lot of our theatre members will be members of PAC.

Ms Fulton: Yes.

MS CLAY: Because I know quite a number of our PAC members do not have the ability to do that. They must break even or return a profit. So are you able to provide me some meaningful answer on that?

Ms Fulton: I will take that on notice and come back to you.

[...]

Ms Cheyne: So, my office has just advised that PAC members in the ACT are Belconnen Arts Centre, Canberra Theatre Centre, Flowers of Peace, Helen O'Neil, the Street Theatre and Tuggeranong Community Arts Association.

MS CLAY: Yes, great. I wonder if you can provide the answer for those ones, if you have it. And if you cannot, you will come back to me on notice with, you know, what the reason is—

Ms Fulton: Yes, we will take that on notice.

Tara Cheyne MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

PAC Australia members funded through the ACT Arts Fund are Belconnen Arts Centre (BAC), Tuggeranong Arts Centre (TAC) and The Street Theatre.

PAC Australia undertakes a national benchmarking survey every two years to collect data on economic activity on performing arts centres across Australia. For its 2019 Economic Activity Benchmarking report, BAC was the only ACT organisation to contribute to the survey. For the 2021 report, BAC and Canberra Theatre Centre contributed to the survey.

BAC and TAC receive funding to manage the arts centres and deliver community arts and cultural development programs. Funding to The Street Theatre is to manage the theatre and deliver professional development programs and productions for local theatre artists. In concert with Government arts funding, organisations managing ACT arts facilities are expected to leverage own source revenue and commercial capacity through management of the facility which will in turn enable reinvestment back into organisational management and arts programming.

artsACT does not hold the breakdown of data to determine the percentage of government subsidy across the different types of activity undertaken at each facility.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality

Signature: 

Date: 30/11/23

By the Minister for the Arts, Tara Cheyne MLA