



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Business, Arts and Creative Industries

In relation to: Business, Arts and Creative Industries and Arts Sector Salary surveys

Hearing: 19 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript p 56-58

Transcript provided: 28 November 2025

Answer Due: 5 December 2025

MS CLAY: Thank you, chair. Minister, it was great to hear about some of those funding announcements earlier. I am just wondering if there is any update on the 25 per cent increase for art centres and organisations?

Mr Pettersson: I am not in a position to provide an update in these hearings. That is a decision for cabinet through budget processes. As you will be aware, ACT Labor has an election commitment to deliver a 25 per cent increase in funding to arts organisations. Government has a keen eye to keep our commitments. I look forward to being able to say more at a future time.

MS CLAY: Thank you, Minister, that is almost word for word I think on our last answer to this one.

Mr Pettersson: I wish I could say something.

MS CLAY: No, I hear you. You will appreciate it is quite difficult for those centres and organisations at the moment, they are in the middle of drafting up their bids for their service arrangements—their multi-year service arrangements, and they need to do this without actually knowing whether it is appropriate for them to ask for the funds that they need or not.

Noting what you have just said, how is Arts ACT managing those conversations when you have got a bunch of organisations writing multi-year service agreement funding bids who are asking you what funds are available and I guess you cannot tell them?

Ms Comacchio: I think I can respond to that. So, yes, as you just said, arts organisations are currently preparing their applications for the next round of multi-year funding. If an arts organisation is asking for a substantial increase, they would need to be able to demonstrate what that would be for.

So for us, very much, that is separate to this process. Arts organisations will be bidding for a certain amount, they will be explaining to us what that would be for and they will be assessed on their merits as they are through each of these processes.

MS CLAY: What is a substantial increase? Is that like a 5 per cent increase or a 50 per cent increase, or like, what does that mean?

Ms Comacchio: Each application would be assessed against the criteria on its merits. Ms Starick: I can say from the previous round we had the—the range of applications vary from a 100 per cent increase, to above that, to modest increases. This is irrespective of the funding that was available. So there is a very broad range.

MS CLAY: Broad range. Yes, sure. Are you hearing from a lot of organisations they are now bound by and very enthusiastic about the fair remuneration for artists principles? The ACT government principles that artists should be paid fairly for their work like any other worker. Are you hearing from a lot of centres and organisations that they are finding it quite difficult to pay their workers fairly on their current funding?

Ms Comacchio: I have not heard that, no.

MS CLAY: Yes, interesting. Have you heard from a number of organisations that because for the last 10 years their indexation was pinned to CPI rather than WPI, which—or the community sector indexation rate, which more fairly reflects their costs, that they in fact went backwards for 10 years. So when some of them ask for a funding increase, they may actually just be asking in real terms for what they had a decade ago. Is that a conversation that you are having?

Ms Comacchio: No, not explicitly. I am, you know, aware of—you know, last year the indexation was 2.5 per cent, and of course for some organisations costs are increasing in certain areas. But I have not explicitly had that conversation across—

MS CLAY: Have any of them presented to you with any information about their salary surveys or any information about what they are paying their staff at the moment? Has that information come through at all?

Ms Comacchio: I will have to take that on notice in terms of—because I do not think they are required to provide that as part of the annual process.

MS CLAY: I did not mean as a requirement. I meant as information that might be coming to you from the sector to demonstrate the fact that the funding has not been sufficient to allow them to pay their staff fairly.

Ms Starick: We might take that on notice just to check if any information like that has come through.

Michael Pettersson MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- Funding is provided to arts organisations through the Arts Organisations Investment Program (the Program). The guidelines outline the following requirements regarding fair remuneration and organisational sustainability:
 - that funding requests should prioritise the core operational costs necessary to sustain their activities and ensure appropriate payment of arts workers and artists, in line with the Remuneration Principles and Practices for Artists and Arts Workers.
 - that arts organisations are expected to operate within their capacity and resources, rather than delivering overly ambitious programs and outcomes that risk staff wellbeing or organisational viability.
- To further strengthen sustainability, organisations are encouraged under the Program guidelines to diversify their revenue streams by increasing own-source income and seeking funding from a range of sources, including government, non-government, and private sector entities. Diversification supports financial resilience and fosters innovative revenue models that can adapt to changing economic conditions
- At the time of the hearing, no information had been provided directly to artsACT to demonstrate that funding has not been sufficient to allow arts organisations to pay staff fairly.
- Following the hearing, on 3 December 2025, artsACT was provided a copy of a submission to the 2026-27 ACT Budget consultation process which contained information related to this issue.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Economics, Industry and Recreation

Signature:



Date: 11-12-25

By the Minister for Business, Arts and Creative Industries, Michael Pettersson MLA