

ITEM 3. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SPONSORSHIP – NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS – NATIONAL RESEARCH INTO THE SMALL TO MEDIUM VISUAL ARTS SECTOR**FILE NO: S125465****SUMMARY**

The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is Australia's peak body for the visual arts. NAVA has applied under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program for partial funding towards a national research study on the significance of the small to medium visual arts sector, with detailed analysis of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Sydney is home to the largest proportion of these organisations in Australia.

The study is to be undertaken through Economists at Large, a not-for-profit economic research firm, in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts. The study will provide a summary of existing federal, state and local government support nationally, with detailed case studies specific to Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Currently, data of this nature does not exist.

Changes in the federal funding environment in the 2014/15 financial year have significantly impacted on the small to medium cultural sector. These changes have had significant ramifications for local government.

The proposed Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship will help the City improve its programs, and support both the City and the cultural sector to advocate to other government agencies, such as ArtsNSW, for a more cohesive funding environment.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve cash sponsorship of \$15,000 (excluding GST) under the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program to the National Association for the Visual Arts to undertake the 'National Research into the Small to Medium Visual Arts Sector' project; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer a sponsorship agreement with the National Association for the Visual Arts.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.

BACKGROUND

1. On 25 August 2014, Council unanimously adopted the *Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan*.
2. Actions 1.51 and 2.18 of the *Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan* call on the City to obtain independent research to support the City's enabling activities and measure community demand for creative activities.
3. The National Association for the Visual Arts is Australia's peak body for the visual arts. It operates as a not-for-profit organisation, providing funding for artists, advocacy, policy advice, and the establishment of best practice standards for the arts sector.
4. Following the 2014/15 Federal Budget, the Federal Ministry for the Arts reduced funding to the Australia Council for the Arts, producing a new funding body entitled the National Program for Excellence in the Arts (NPEA), which was contained within the Ministry itself. This has since been rebranded as 'Catalyst'.
5. A Senate Inquiry was subsequently held to review the formation of NPEA and the associated changes to the funding landscape. The City lodged a submission to this Inquiry noting it was "greatly concerned that the small to medium cultural sector, and individual artists, will be disproportionately impacted by changes to the Federal Government's arts funding framework."
6. The City's submission to the Senate Inquiry also noted "the need for a cohesive funding environment to allow new and emerging work to develop to the point where it may attract other funding sources, including commercial and philanthropic support." The rapidity of the change in federal funding inhibited the City's capacity to adapt its funding programs to meet subsequent unmet demand. To that end, the City received an 11 per cent increase in applications for funding, of which it was able to fund just 26 per cent of applicants.
7. The City provides support to a number of small to medium visual arts organisations, including 107 Projects, Alaska Projects, 4A Gallery, Object Gallery and Firstdraft. These organisations have a significant impact, providing career opportunities for emerging and mid-career artists, diversifying the city's evening economy, and supporting the city's creative industries.
8. The absence of clear data on cross-government funding for the small to medium cultural sector inhibits the City's capacity to identify the best avenue for investment, and limits the capacity of both the arts and local government sectors to advocate for alternate funding approaches at the state and federal level.
9. The City is currently undertaking research with the University of Tasmania into the cultural and economic impact of the small to medium visual arts sector within the City of Sydney local government area. This research is designed to provide baseline data on the current size of the sector, qualitative information on its wellbeing, and return on investment. However, it does not provide benchmarks against other state or local government areas, or information on the current investment by other agencies.

10. The National Association for the Visual Arts 'National Research into the Small to Medium Visual Arts Sector' project is being conducted through the not-for-profit economic research firm Economist at Large, in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts.
11. The 'National Research into the Small to Medium Visual Arts Sector' project will produce a comprehensive report that identifies the economic and cultural impact of the small to medium visual arts sector in Australia. The project will include developing and implementing a replicable research methodology, consulting with relevant stakeholders, a literature review, statistical and qualitative data analysis, case studies and assessment of chronological changes.
12. The project outcomes will include a report showing social and economic impacts of the sector nationally, with detailed analysis of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and case studies on individual organisations. NAVA will also present a forum outlining the report findings.
13. NAVA's 'National Research into the Small to Medium Visual Arts Sector' project aligns with the City's *Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan*, and will provide information to equip the cultural sector to respond to the current funding landscape.
14. The request for sponsorship has been evaluated against the Knowledge Exchange Sponsorship Program and support is recommended. All sponsorship recipients are required to sign a contract, meet specific performance outcomes, and acquit their sponsorship.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

15. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This sponsorship is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City – the proposed research project will provide data through which to inform support for the creative industries in Sydney, and will allow both the City and NAVA to provide cultural leadership and strengthen cultural partnerships.
 - (b) Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships – changes in federal funding brought about by cuts to the Australia Council for the Arts have significantly impacted on the small to medium arts sector. Support for this project will enable the City to consider innovative financing and funding approaches, and participate more effectively in broader governance reform processes related to cultural funding.

Organisational Impact

16. Sponsorship of NAVA will require some staffing resources. Specifically, the City's Strategy Advisor - Culture will be required to liaise with the organisation through the development of the project and to ensure this project adds value to the City's existing data gathering.

Social / Cultural / Community

17. The project strongly aligns with the City's *Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan* through the provision of independent research relative to the cultural life of the city.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

18. Sufficient funding is from the Grants and Sponsorship allocation within the draft City Life divisional budget for 2016/17.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

19. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

20. In order to ensure sufficient time to conduct the research, NAVA will require confirmation of funding by early July 2016.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

21. Public endorsement of the *Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan* indicates widespread support for the provision independent research related to the cultural sector.

KIM WOODBURY

Chief Operating Officer

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