

C O N T E M P O R A R Y A R T S O R G A N I S A T I O N S A U S T R A L I A

CAOA SUBMISSION TO THE MAJOR PERFORMING ARTS FRAMEWORK REVIEW 26 November 2018

QUESTION BOX 1:

Would the combination of a formal assessment process with a long-term contractual period offered by the model described above (four year contract + four year extension, subject to KPIs being met) provide an appropriate balance between flexibility, accountability and funding certainty?

Alternatively, would this balance be better provided by another model (e.g. full assessment process every four years but with a four-year notice period for any changes to funding levels. Eight-year contract with mid-point review)?

- Contemporary Arts Organisations Australia (CAOA) strongly advocates for a model that facilitates funding continuity rather than funding in perpetuity. In light of this, we recommend that a two x four-year funding cycle would offer stability while ensuring that the Major Performing Arts organisations (MPAs) be held to the same standards of reporting and accountability as the small to medium sector. While CAOAs are predominately in the non-profit visual arts sector, there are parallel issues around stability of funding, infrastructure and housing, that also affect the performing arts small to medium sector. If all organisations had six to eight-year contracts it would allow significantly more surety and build capacity for long-term planning across the entire arts ecology, not just the MPAs. We think the MPAs should have long-term contractual periods, but strongly advocate that all other organisations that are meeting the similar requirements by demonstrating excellence, leadership and ambition should have long-term support but who are not be included in the MPA structure.

Should governments consider funding companies from other artforms on a multi- partite basis through the same enhanced framework? If so, which artforms should be considered?

- CAOAs advocates for the inclusion of other artforms on a multi-partite basis and that the separation of the performing arts from the visual arts for example is important because they are operating on different platforms. CAOAs does not think the inclusion of other artforms will diminish the operational funding of the MPAs but that more money should be put into the small to medium sector to take some of the pressure off. What would be beneficial is to recognise a diversity of interdisciplinary practices and intersectional spaces rather than organisations that fit neatly into one genre. For example, there are a number of organisations that sit within funding bodies' frameworks for the visual arts who are working specifically in the performing arts.

QUESTION BOX 2:

What modifications, if any, should be made to the current Framework's definition of an MPA company (at Appendix 2) when determining the eligibility criteria for being asked to make a submission for multi- partite funding under the enhanced model? For example, should any other financial, artistic, audience, leadership and diversity criteria be incorporated, or should any of the existing criteria be changed?

- While CAOAs agrees that the language of excellence and leadership to represent the role of major performing arts organisations is important, it is clearly evident that there are many organisations that sit outside of the MPAs that continue to demonstrate excellence and leadership through ambitious programming and engagement. CAOAs calls for a rethink to think of the broader ecology that the MPAs sit within—to acknowledge the significant role

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the MPAs play and the infrastructure they provide through culture, employment, audiences and the economy. We think the \$1.6 million figure in earned income is essentially arbitrary as a measure of success and excludes many organisations that would be qualified otherwise.

How could periodic sector-specific scans inform eligibility decisions?

- Periodic sector-specific scans could work to ensure MPAs meet their targets and offer peer advice and support if necessary. There should be policies in place that clearly state the eligibility criteria for an MPA and establish the impacts of non-compliance, be it independent assessments or removal of funding.

Should individual Australian jurisdictions' demographics (including population) and arts ecologies be taken into account in eligibility decisions? If so, how?

- CAO acknowledges the significant role the MPAs play in the national performing arts ecology. However, CAO maintains that the MPAs must demonstrate greater representation of and responsiveness to Australia's distinctively pronounced multicultural society and ongoing cultural shifts. This expectation is particularly vital within the demographic contexts in which organisations operate and the needs of the communities they serve. CAO does not want to see a negative impact on the greater performing arts ecology if the pool of funding is reduced for everyone as a result of re-appropriating funds currently reserved for the MPAs to support the small to medium sector. The small to medium sector is critical in supporting the career trajectories of artists, performers and professionals through a comprehensive commitment that ranges from the identification of emerging talent, professional development and growth. CAO highly recommends that the MPAs, in tandem with their sector peer organisations in small to medium sector that receive multiyear funding, are demonstrating excellence and leadership should be given surety of funding.

QUESTION BOX 3:

Do you agree that the assessment process should comprise the three tiers listed above? If not, what do you think should be considered in the assessment process?

- CAO agrees that something like a tiered system could better recognise the organisations that may not meet the \$1.6 million target but are achieving the same level of leadership and excellence as the MPAs. CAO calls for greater accountability for MPAs and they should be assessed by the standards set by the government.

How should assessment of these (or other) aspects of a company's submitted strategic intent and proposition inform governments' decisions on funding levels?

How, if at all, should peer advice be incorporated into the assessment process?

- CAO recommends that peer panel reviews would offer greater transparency to the strategic planning and reporting undertaken by the MPAs. The assessment process should be set against eligibility criteria and peer advice should be incorporated if organisations are failing to meet those requirements.

QUESTION BOX 4:

How long a notice period should companies receive before funding levels are adjusted if KPIs are consistently not met? Should this differ from company to company depending on individual artistic and business models?

- MPAs should be prompt in communicating with government and independent bodies when it becomes evident that KPIs will not be met. If KPIs are not being met, MPAs should undergo

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a clearly defined process of responding to funding bodies' concerns, rather than having funding discontinued immediately. We think there should be flexibility to renegotiate contract terms (including funding and KPIs) rather than simply extending the previous terms. There should also be a requirement to undergo a full submission and assessment process after each full term.

What would be the advantages and disadvantages of different companies being funded to deliver on different priorities such as regional touring?

- The small to medium sector develops and delivers expansive regional touring of self-curated and partnership projects. We are able to achieve this through a combination of funding support from various funding bodies and foundations alongside dedicating earned income to this important aspect of broadening opportunities for artists, audiences and regional organisations. CAO A thinks the MPAs should be showing leadership by touring nationally and internationally and by working with education and outreach to ensure they are reaching large audiences from diverse communities.

Should reporting on companies' performance be made public in aggregate on an annual basis to increase public understanding of outcomes?

- CAO A firmly believes there should be more transparency of the MPA's performance against their own as well as stakeholders' KPIs and criteria for government funding. As is the case for all other organisations, the MPAs should be held accountable, not only to government but to the public and external stakeholders. CAO A recommends a similar model to the Arts Council England where reports and data from the MPAs are made public.

QUESTION BOX 5:

How should governments balance the benefits of flexibility (increasing the ability to respond to opportunity and ensure accountability) and certainty of funding (giving companies the confidence to plan for the future and take artistic risks)?

- As previously stated, CAO A believes that the MPAs should be given surety of funding but we also advocate that the small to medium sector is given commensurate security around funding that is not currently provided. This would build capacity across the sector and make MPAs accountable for the same level of reporting as small to medium organisations. There should also be a clear, quantifiable entry and exit process based on a framework that can be clearly demonstrated.

QUESTION BOX 6:

How should governments' multi-partite contracts with companies reflect expectations in relation to diversity, access and creative leadership (including with regard to the development and presentation of Australian works)?

- CAO A believes that the MPAs should be meeting targets for cultural and socio-economic diversity, gender equality, access, first nations and LGBTQI representation. These targets should be developed alongside policies to ensure safe spaces are created for staff members, musicians or performers who may need specific support. There should be similar quotas for board members to ensure the executive also represent the diversity of the workforce.

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QUESTION BOX 7:

In undertaking a sector scan of touring activity and considering funding mechanisms, what should governments consider?

- MPAs should be measured against a clear set of criteria set out in the framework and touring activity should be considered as part of that criteria if necessary to the organisation. Key criteria for touring activity should include community engagement and outreach in regional centres as well as education to schools.

QUESTION BOX 8:

If a competitive Enhancement Fund were introduced, what should it be used to support? Is there anything that it should not be used to support?

- If a competitive Enhancement Fund were introduced, it should be used to provide support to key areas around access and community engagement. This should include first nations representation and diversity targets that will enable companies to ensure support is provided to these communities.

What would be the advantages and disadvantages of redirecting a small portion of core funding for an Enhancement Fund?

- CAO A doesn't believe that redirection of funds from the MPAs is useful since reducing the capacity of MPAs will not benefit the performing arts ecology more broadly. We advocate for more funding in the pool so that organisations that are continuously achieving excellence and ambition with less resources can be supported as well.

QUESTION BOX 9:

How, if at all, should venue-related interdependencies be accounted for under the Framework?

- Infrastructure is a major issue for the small to medium sector as those costs continue to increase and place critical pressure on operational budgets. Organisations that are funded at a sustainable level and have venue-related interdependencies have greater capacity across both operations and programs given that they have certainty of space and don't need to worry about venues for hire. Certainty of space is a major pressure point across the small to medium arts sector and it's critical that core funding provides support to cover those basic costs towards keeping the doors open.