

Media Release

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NATIONAL ARTS FUNDING CHANGES TO IMPACT THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF VICTORIANS

Funding changes across Australian arts programs recently announced by the [Australian Government](#) will have damaging flow-on effects for the health and mental wellbeing of Victorians according to VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter.

More than 60 small to medium-sized arts companies, including some VicHealth partners, that had previously received Federal Government support have had their latest funding rounds rejected creating uncertainty for many programs and companies.

Ms Rechter described the outcomes, as incredibly disappointing for the arts community and as worrying news for the health of Victorians.

“Art based activities like dancing, singing and movement are known to improve cardiac function, general fitness and strength,” Ms Rechter said.

“The benefits of arts programs also extend far beyond physical health gains.

“Participation in arts is known to improve social connection, skills development, increase confidence and self-esteem, and add a sense of belonging – areas that can have a crucial impact on a person’s mental health and wellbeing.

“Taking part in arts activities can have a big impact on helping us deal with stress, anxiety or depression, and increased life satisfaction. We also know it contributes positively to the Australian economy.

“VicHealth has been working with arts organisations and providing opportunities for Victorians to get involved for decades, through festivals and programs like [White Night Melbourne](#), and [MOTION](#).

“There are many great programs doing important work that have been impacted by these funding changes, including the Black Arm Band, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing arts company and past VicHealth Awards winner.”

“Research consistently shows that arts participation is associated with better physical and mental health outcomes so it’s extremely disappointing to learn that 62 arts companies now face uncertainty due to funding cuts.

Each year the creative industries make a \$50 billion economic impact against an investment of \$7 billion. A 2013 KPMG report showed that as a result of its links in the economy, the arts and culture sector contributes to \$11.4 billion of annual Victorian GSP (gross state product) and around 110,000 Victorian full-time equivalent jobs.

Ms Rechter says we have nothing to lose by supporting arts, and everything to gain.

“Arts are a fun way to get creative, meet new people and move your body so you can feel happier and healthier.”

Media Contacts