

## Minister for the Arts

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Ms Nicole Beyer and Ms Veronica Pardo  
Co-Convenors  
Arts Industry Council Victoria  
c/ 222 Bank Street  
South Melbourne Vic 3205

Dear Ms Beyer and Ms Pardo,

Thank you for your letter of 27 June 2014.

The Napthine Government knows that artists and arts organisations are at the heart of a vibrant Victoria. The arts encourage the pursuit of knowledge and learning; they animate and strengthen our communities; and they add depth and resilience to our international relationships. The arts also promote social well-being and cohesion by offering experiences that strengthen community ties. For these reasons, the contribution of the arts to our society is fundamental and enduring.

The Napthine Government also recognises the important economic value of the arts for individuals and Victoria, which is why we will continue to assist arts organisations to contribute to building a better Victoria. The arts generate over \$11.4 billion each year and deliver the equivalent of 110,000 full-time jobs across the State.

The arts thrive in an environment where the economy is strong and Victorians have the means to experience and support them. Since coming to office in 2010, the Napthine Government has created 78,700 new jobs and delivered economic security to people across the State. This provides new opportunities and new audiences for Victorian artists, whether they perform and create in our world-renowned buildings, regional theatres or warehouses or laneways. Our economic record is matched and complemented by our strong commitment to the arts sector.

Our focus is helping to support the Victorian arts sector to develop and thrive. We want the arts to be able to be experienced, cherished and supported by more Victorians – and by more visitors to Victoria. A re-elected Napthine Government will continue to create opportunities for artists and arts organisations to engage with their audiences, including a diverse range of Victorians, such as youth; people with a disability; and our Indigenous and multi-cultural communities. We will also continue to support the vital contribution that the arts make to our physical and mental well-being, the education of our children and the care of our senior Victorians.

The Napthine Government's investment in the arts extends throughout the State, promoting local arts scenes and community involvement, from grants to preserve Victoria's history through to the Melbourne Museum's Outreach program, that between 2011 and 2013 gave close to 200 kindergartens and pre-schools in our outer-suburbs the opportunity to discover its cultural treasures. Our strong record of supporting the arts in regional Victoria and throughout the suburbs will continue. Our regional galleries, performing arts centres and arts organisations attract 1.5 million visitors a year, providing over 600 direct local jobs. Victorian artists create and present work in a wide variety of venues and spaces. Our focus, however, is not only on these physical sites, but the people who inhabit them. It is the diversity and dynamism of artists and the people who engage with them which gives life and texture to our civic spaces. A re-elected Napthine Government will continue to ensure our cultural precincts across the State foster local talent and offer the best of the arts to all Victorians.

The importance of the arts to Victoria's economic and cultural prosperity is indisputable. Only the Napthine Government truly understands this and has the capacity to give practical effect to this vision. Our strong plan for the arts is based around five key priorities:

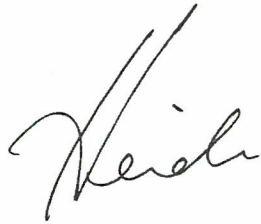
- **Invest in artistic excellence:** arts in Victoria will be among the best in the world;
- **Increase participation and enhance access:** the arts will be enjoyed, cherished and supported by more Victorians, as well as visitors from interstate and overseas;
- **Create vibrant places:** the arts will be created and experienced in vibrant places through the State;
- **Strengthen sustainability:** the arts sector will continue to strengthen its financial sustainability, its capacity for growth and its economic and social contribution across Victoria; and
- **Increase international engagement:** the arts will deepen our international engagement with the world, particularly Asia.

This plan recognises the need to avoid complacency to ensure Victoria continues to be the leading arts State in Australia. We are therefore very proud of our unprecedented level of investment in the arts.

The government has an essential role to play in supporting the arts sector, but it can only do this if it effectively harnesses the entrepreneurial spirit of our many and diverse artists and arts organisations. The Napthine Government believes there is even more scope for our community, the arts sector, government and our philanthropic and corporate supporters to work together to secure the long-term artistic and economic development of the arts in Victoria.

Consultation and engagement with the sector and across government underpins this collaborative endeavour to ensure our policies meet the needs of the arts sector and its audiences, today and into the future. To help achieve this, we have already committed to consulting with the arts sector in reviewing the *Arts Victoria Act 1972* to ensure it adequately expresses the aspirations of the sector and our community for the future of the arts in Victoria. Only the Napthine Government's plan for the arts will guarantee Victoria's vibrant future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi', written in a cursive style.

**Hon Heidi Victoria MP**  
Minister for the Arts