

MEDIA RELEASE

BUDGET BOOST TO VISUAL ARTS

The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) today enthusiastically welcomed the news announced in the Government's Budget that the essential funding for the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy (VACS) has been renewed for another four years to the extent of \$24.7 million, with partial indexation being added from year 2.

Tamara Winikoff, Executive Director of NAVA said today, "Australia's artists will be celebrating today, the renewal of this crucial government commitment which will ensure the sustainability of the innovative cultural work of artists and their support organisations. It now seems pretty certain that the state & territory governments who are partners in VACS, will continue their matching contribution".

"The exciting outcomes of the first four years of this investment can be seen in substantial increases in organisations' public programmes and levels of earned income and sponsorship, and a 41% per cent increase in gallery visitor numbers," Winikoff continued.

Artists also will be assisted to take advantage of international opportunities through the 'Australia on the World Stage' program. \$24 million is promised over four years for programs of the Australian International Cultural Council.

"With the rapidly increasing number of visual artist residencies, major exhibitions, festivals and art fairs, commissions and artist exchanges, this money will get more of our artists out into the world, and further stimulate international interest in the vitality of Australia's culture and content creation," continued Winikoff.

There was also confirmation of \$21.2 million in new funding over 3 years for the National Portrait Gallery to develop additional services and enhance its exhibition and education programmes for visitors. This will increase its capacity for showcasing artists' representation of significant people who have enlivened Australian public life.

"Support for the extra \$3 million sought in the budget for the payment of artists' fees for exhibitions in public galleries, and \$1 million for IT development will remain an election issue, to address the problem of falling levels of artists' incomes and the continuing challenge of lack of access to technology for artists and art spaces," added Winikoff.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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