

ALLEGRA SPENDER: ARTS POLICY OVERVIEW

The arts and cultural sector gives enormous value to our society, enriching our lives and supporting more than 350,000 jobs. Australians love the arts and for many it played an important role in supporting their health and wellbeing during the pandemic. Telling Australian stories is vital to our country's culture, particularly in respect of recognising and understanding the voices of First Nations people. The arts are also important to Wentworth, with the constituency playing host to venues such as the Griffin Theatre and Bondi Pavilion, and many more just around the corner.

However, the arts have been hit hard by COVID-19, with many artists facing two years' worth of uncertainty and cancelled performances. The government's response was inadequate, with policy measures like JobKeeper and the arts funding package only partially cushioning the impact. Over many years the government has also consistently undermined the sustainability and independence of the ABC and our public media.

We should support our arts sector like the public good it is. We need to ensure that our rich cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity is fully represented across all art forms and strive for our arts to be affordable, accessible, and participatory. If elected, I will support a federal approach to the arts that centres around three main areas:

1. Investing in the ABC and the SBS and encouraging greater diversity in our media.

This means restoring the ABC's budget, investing in its international platform, and protecting its editorial independence. It also means ensuring that public broadcasters continue to tell Australian stories and promote diversity within their workplace and among their suppliers.

2. Supporting our creative industries to bounce back. Specifically:

- **Restoring funding to the Australia Council** and re-establishing the system of peer-reviewed funding allocation by art form experts at arms-length from government
- **Cutting red-tape** to make it easier for small and medium-sized organisations to access support
- **Implementing a meaningful quota** for Australian screen content across all platforms and making sure multinational tech giants pay their fair share of tax in Australia
- **Enhancing coordination** on policy between federal, state, and local governments, with governance models that centre the expertise of the arts and cultural sector
- **Considering ways to increase philanthropic funding** for the arts in the long-term, by learning from policies that have been pursued overseas, such as the tax treatment of charitable donations

3. Re-building arts and cultural education. Specifically:

- **Redressing the balance of costs of Arts degrees**, which have been targeted by recent government policy
- **Developing a National Culture Plan**, as recommended by the recent House Committee
- **Strengthening Indigenous arts and culture**, for example via the Australia Council's First Nations programs and by considering the merits of a National Centre of Indigenous Culture that is co-designed with Indigenous communities