

CULTURE AND THE ARTS FUNDING

Motion

Resumed from 31 August on the following motion moved by Hon Linda Savage —

That this house calls on the government to immediately increase funding for culture and the arts in Western Australia to compensate for cuts made in the 2009–10 and 2010–11 budgets.

HON LINDA SAVAGE (East Metropolitan) [2.06 pm]: Last week I concluded my comments by referring to tabled paper 2262. This paper details the cuts made to the Department of Culture and the Arts budget over the financial years 2008–09 to 2012–13, and records the total saving as a result of the cuts as being just over \$12 million. I wanted to read that into the record, because that was the response from the Minister for Culture and the Arts to a question about what funding would be lost because of the three per cent efficiency dividend.

I want to talk now about what the effects of that cut have been, and I will use the Art Gallery of Western Australia as an example. Some members may have read an article in the business section of *The West Australian* of Saturday, 12 June 2010. That article was about the retiring chair of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Helen Cook. In that article she referred to the loss of \$700 000 from the gallery's budget in the previous two years because of the cuts in state government funding. She referred also to the increased costs for the gallery, in particular utility costs, during that period. So, one of the effects on the Art Gallery of what was called the efficiency dividend was that the gallery did make cuts. People will recall that one of the actions that the gallery took was to close the gallery on Tuesdays. That closure continues, including during school holidays. I assume that will not affect the majority of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting participants, because they will be here, I gather, late in the week, until the following Monday. However, even with these cuts, the result was that in 2011, the state government finally had to acknowledge that the gallery could not afford to cover its costs, and it could not make ends meet, and it provided the gallery with \$800 000 in short-term assistance to enable it to cover the cost of its bills. That is hardly an efficient way for the gallery to run its budgets or for the government to run budgets in that area. The Museum, as a result of the institution, I suppose, being too big to fail and therefore having to be bailed out, got \$2.7 million to meet higher utility and maintenance costs. My view is that this government's cuts to the budget of the Department of Culture and the Arts not only had serious effects but also sent a very disappointing message to the sector.

I will refer to some comments that the Chamber of Arts and Culture made following this year's budget. Some members will know that the Chamber of Arts and Culture was set up last year. It is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to bring together the arts sector in Western Australia to debate, discuss and take action as a collective on major issues that impact the sector and to promote the value and achievements of the arts and culture, people and activities in Western Australia. It is chaired by Sam Walsh, the CEO of Rio Tinto, and its board has on it a number of very high-profile Western Australians. In response to the most recent budget, the chamber stated —

The 2011 State Budget sends a disappointing message of neglect to the many Western Australians who understand and value the widespread and vital contribution that arts and culture makes to Australian society.

The Arts Minister previously indicated that the 2011 budget would aim to bring arts portfolios recurring funds back to where they were before the 'efficiency dividend' cuts. We were therefore expecting this outcome in the budget.

...

'There is still a gaping hole in the forward estimates for Indexation for arts organisations. In 2011, the not for profit arts organisations have been offered 1.8% indexation in a marketplace where business costs including wages are running at three times that level. The budget handed down today does not provide for indexation and there remains a projected shortfall to the base funding for arts organisations of \$4.2m beyond 2011/12' said Mr Walsh

We are talking about not only the savings made by the government but also the money that has been taken from the budget. We are also talking about the fact that there has not been what we would expect as a minimum increase for organisations to cover the rising costs of utilities and wages.

I will also talk about the effect of the budget cuts on the Black Swan State Theatre Company, which also commented on that budget in the 2011 winter edition of its newsletter. The article written by Kate Cherry, who is the artistic director, stated —

We are doing everything we can with the resources we currently have available to us. Paid attendances to Black Swan productions increased by 25% in 2010 and are on track to increase by 44% in 2011.

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The PRESIDENT: Order! Can we just have some of the conversations, particularly right next door to the speaker's elbow, toned down a little so that the speaker is not distracted?

Hon LINDA SAVAGE: Thank you, Mr President, and I was told recently that I do not speak loudly enough, so I am doing my best.

The article also stated —

However venue related costs at the State Theatre Centre alone are double what Black Swan spent in 2010.

I asked a number of questions in this place about whether the Black Swan State Theatre Company would receive an increase in funding because, having moved into the new state theatre centre, its rehearsal space costs and its administrative running costs have increased and it has not been funded for those increased costs. In fact, the Black Swan State Theatre Company receives about \$1 million less from the state government than the comparable state theatre companies in South Australia and Queensland. Interestingly, concerns about the cuts and the attitude to culture and the arts have also resulted in a Facebook page being set up. Members might be interested to look at that page. More than 3 700 people have registered online for what is, I suppose, an online petition or meeting of people who support it. The Facebook petition, which is called “More funding for WA arts!” states —

The amount of state government funding given to the WA arts is ridiculous and strange given how rich the state is. If you are an artist, if you enjoy the arts in any way, if you want Perth to be an exciting amazing city that you can be proud of, please join this group and get everyone you know to join. We won't have our best talents leaving anymore! We won't have our state orchestra practicing in a ...

I will leave a gap there —

basement! We're going to make a stand ...

This is not just to provide those organisations with funding, but to get vocal about arts in WA general, to let everyone know that WA can be a creative, exciting state, and to show people how all of the arts are necessary and important, whether they are large state institutions or DIY projects. If we get enough people attending, we can get the government and its people to notice. We can make a difference.

I did not leave that word out because it was rude; I am not sure whether “friggin” is parliamentary.

Hon Peter Collier: What word?

Hon LINDA SAVAGE: Friggin'. I have said it now.

The PRESIDENT: As you were quoting from a document, I will take it as the word used in that document.

Hon Robyn McSweeney: What does that mean?

Hon LINDA SAVAGE: I will leave Hon Robyn McSweeney to look up “friggin”!

Therefore, a lot of people, not just me, are commenting about the disappointment and the effects of having an efficiency dividend cut in the culture and the arts portfolio. As I said, it is not just the cut but also the fact that there is no adequate indexation in funding.

The government has made some announcements; for example, the \$10 million that was first announced in May 2009 for maintenance of the cladding of the gallery. That is finally taking place now and hopefully will be finished before the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. There were other announcements, which I will refer to if I get the chance. The Museum of Modern Art partnership might be another one. That is \$6 million over a number of years to assist with those exhibitions. But that does not add up to the amount of money that has been lost. I have also gone through every press release from the department to add up the money and there is a little bit of, I suppose we might use the term “double-dipping”, for some events that are perhaps Eventscorp or Lotterywest-funded. However, the core budget has been cut and in my calculation that has not been compensated for. It would be rather duplicitous in any event for the government to take away with one hand and then suggest that it is giving something when in fact it is using money that has already been saved as those total savings, which I understand do not represent the total amount that has been lost.

But it is more than that, and that is what I am hearing. It is not just the cuts; it is that there is no vision as well. I remind members of what the previous Labor government did. Some members will recall the Ignite package, which was the single biggest state government arts funding injection in the state's history. It was a \$73 million package of initiatives and its announcement was greeted with universal applause. It included a number of specific projects; some members may have attended the recent Indigenous Art Awards, which was started in 2007 and is now in its fourth year. I would like to talk about another one of the projects, which was the

acquisition funding for the Art Gallery of Western Australia, because that provides an example of where leadership by government can actually help to bring about corporate and private contributions as well. In my opinion, that leadership and vision is sadly lacking now. The acquisition fund—what became known as the TomorrowFund—began with an upfront \$10 million grant directly to the gallery for acquisitions. When the Labor government granted that \$10 million, the challenge was for the gallery to find private and corporate donations to match that \$10 million, and, once that was done, it would trigger a further \$5 million in funding from the state government. Some members may know that the \$10 million amount to match the original \$10 million that was granted was recently reached through a very large private donation by Andrew and Nicola Forrest. That has now triggered the final \$5 million grant from the state government. It is initiatives like that that really have the capacity to unleash philanthropy and also give many, many people an opportunity to contribute. Those are legacies of the previous Labor government.

I recently asked questions in this place because I, like others, have some difficulty following the funding arrangements and budgets for the Department of Culture and the Arts. On 28 June I asked a question in relation to the Ignite package. I asked whether the minister could confirm whether the total amount of funds committed for the Ignite package had been expended or were under contract for expenditure; and, if not, what total amount of Ignite funds remained uncommitted. I was asked to put the question on notice and I subsequently got the answer that the Ignite package was composed of funding streams from capital allocations for the department's portfolio organisations, one-off events and specific grant funding. The minister said that he was happy for officers of the Department of Culture and the Arts to provide an appropriate briefing on actual allocations if required.

Similarly, I asked on 29 June whether the minister could confirm that the department's annual report for 2009–10 listed every grant made during that period; and, if not, what additional grants were made. I was first told that it was too difficult to provide an answer and that the minister was unable to do it within the time period; I was asked to put the question on notice. I put the question on notice and got the same answer—to the effect that the minister would be happy for officers of the Department of Culture and the Arts to provide an appropriate briefing on funding programs and grant allocations.

I sought that briefing, and it is in my diary; I will be interested to hear what they have to say, because I have some concerns that the answers to those questions cannot go on the public record. Perhaps someone from the government will stand and try to suggest that, notwithstanding the cuts, more has been spent. The difficulty for me and for others lies in actually working out what has been spent, because the government cannot tell me on the record whether the 2009–10 annual report reflects all the grants that have been made; nor can it tell me whether all the Ignite funding has been expended or committed.

I do not think time will allow me to speak about issues like the Museum; obviously that was \$500 million that had been set aside by the Labor government, but I do not know where that money currently is. It has perhaps been re-cashflowed or moved, but there is currently only \$5 million to progress planning.

I want to talk a little about another aspect of the government's lack of vision and lack of commitment to the arts sector, which many people find so disappointing. I would like to talk about the Committee for Perth and its document "A Cultural Compact for Western Australia — the 10 Year Challenge", because this is really visionary. The "Cultural Compact" was a plan released in November 2008, within a few weeks of the 2008 election, after two years of work exploring a vision for the future of culture and arts in WA. In this document, the committee spoke of a new energy in the community and a new capacity to move forward. I would like to read to members from the project rationale, on page 27 of the document, which outlines what it was that made the committee feel that way. It states —

During 2007, a small group of leaders in the arts and culture sector attended a luncheon hosted by Lotterywest to consider ways to harness the hopes and dreams of Western Australians engaged with the arts, and to turn the outcomes of discussions, forums and meetings into a vision for the future. They believed that this was an excellent time to move forward as there were a number of state, national and local events, changes and initiatives that indicated a new energy in the community and a new capacity to move forward successfully.

I am going to list what was set down as some of those events and changes. The first was the Ignite package, introduced in 2007 by the Labor government, of \$73 million over four years, including \$51 million for new, one-off and capital initiatives; and the second was the national apology to Indigenous Australians by the commonwealth government, signalling a new era in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. They are the first two initiatives that the document refers to. I urge members to read this document, because I think it is a very good document.

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I read out the first two initiatives because they are particularly relevant to the big vision that the Committee for Perth had for Western Australia. Those who have read the committee's research report on the World Centre for Indigenous Culture, released in September 2009, will be aware of the combination of enormous amounts of work and foresight that went into the report, to look for a project that would really build on the new era we had entered after the introduction of the Ignite package, and the commonwealth government's apology to Indigenous Australians.

I want to talk about the World Centre for Indigenous Culture, which was central to the Committee for Perth's vision. It states on page 6 of the research report —

The development of a World Centre for Indigenous Culture presents a unique opportunity for Perth to become a hub of cultural expression and position itself as the capital city in Australia that truly values and celebrates Indigenous culture.

The Committee for Perth has already undertaken substantial work to develop this concept and has obtained support from the Noongar community and key stakeholder groups.

The Committee therefore supports the State Government's commitment to developing a centre for Aboriginal Arts and Culture as a major priority.

Since then, as part of its plans to redevelop the waterfront, the government has confirmed that this centre would be built, according to a report that appeared in *The West Australian* on 14 January, during the later stages of the 10 to 15-year project. To me, 10 to 15 years sounds like "No, it's not going to happen". Very few members of the current government will even be members of Parliament by that time.

The response from the community was one of widespread disappointment. An article that appeared in *The West Australian* on 20 January quotes the President of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects WA branch, Rod Mollett, as saying that the Indigenous centre should be the centrepiece and benchmark for all that followed. I will read from that article —

The head of the State's main architects' group has condemned the decision to push the indigenous cultural centre to the tail end of the waterfront project, saying Perth needed an "architectural icon" and it would be a star tourist attraction.

I must say that I cannot quite imagine what the Perth Waterfront development will be like unless it has that focus, that heart and that anchor—something like we have seen in Brisbane and in the Southbank area of Melbourne. I find it hard to believe that people will be attracted to the Perth Waterfront development just for more retail; that is, to do more shopping. It is hard to imagine people will be attracted there just to look at apartments and businesses. The work that has been done by the Committee for Perth and the vision that it has for this world cultural centre is an enormous opportunity for this city and would be the linchpin of that development. Also, if it is not acted upon, we stand to lose the enormous amount of work, knowledge and cooperation from a range of people who are ready and willing to start to contribute if the state government is prepared to take a lead—although, sadly, it is not.

I recommend to members this document by the Committee for Perth. It is a very powerful document, and it is titled "A centre for Indigenous art & culture: The Cultural Anchor of the Perth Waterfront Project". Interestingly, it has a picture of Sydney Harbour without the Opera House, which shows how uninspiring Sydney would look; and it has a picture of the Perth Waterfront development with the world cultural centre, as opposed to it not there at all. The plan for the centre, which is based on a great deal of hard work, shows that it could house activities of universities; an academic learning and exchange place; an outdoor space with an amphitheatre; a place for cultural business; a waterfront restaurant; a permanent home for the *Nomad Two Worlds* exhibition, which I understand is currently travelling through China; a centre for cultural tourism operators; space for collections on loan from private collectors, such as from Kerry Stokes and Janet Holmes à Court; a place for the rotation of collections such as the Berndt collection from the Art Gallery of WA and collections from the Western Australian Museum; and a home for the Yirra Yaakin theatre and for the WA Aboriginal Dance Company.

At this time when the Premier has described Western Australia as about to enter a period of extreme growth and become an economic powerhouse not just in Australia but also in the world, it seems to me that there has never been a better time for a public-private partnership for an institution like this. I understand there are philanthropists who are ready to contribute to this project. It is a unique opportunity and there is genuine interest from the corporate sector. I will also read the following from the Committee for Perth report —

There are four aspects ... which ... make it truly unique ...

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1. The centre provide a holistic place to facilitate Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural sharing; enable Indigenous people to self represent culture and country; and provide a place where Aboriginal people can gather and find spiritual renewal. It will provide offerings along the full spectrum of cultural appreciation from one dimensional curation to three dimensional performance.
2. The centre will be a building of international significance, incorporating iconic architecture, natural building materials; and, crucially, design which is culturally appropriate.
3. The centre will be recognised globally and will incorporate internationally significant collections of Indigenous artefacts and art.
4. The centre will be a place for capacity-building by providing real opportunities for Indigenous people to be trained and employed or operate small businesses in and around the centre: Aboriginal people will be involved in all facets such as – cultural diplomats, educators, performers, chefs, cultural caretakers and custodians.

I must say that with this project ready to go, it is extremely disappointing that the government is not even prepared to commit to concept work when a project such as this can take many years in development. I see it as a unique opportunity for us to recognise our history and the link between Aboriginal Australians and the rest of us who followed to make Australia what it is today. The government's commitment to the centre is not an optional extra; it should be at the heart of that project. It concerns me that another state could have such a vision and will move ahead on a project such as this, and that any federal funding to be had will go to that state.

What are we left with? I have made it clear that we are left with these three per cent cuts in the culture and arts budget, ad hoc handouts and not even the capacity for me to be able to work out what has been spent. As I said, I look forward to an appropriate briefing. I know, from speaking to smaller organisations that are already on tight budgets, that some are probably in what is called "survival mode". Those that the government knows cannot fail, such as the Art Gallery and the Museum, have been quite literally bailed out. Nothing could be less efficient than dealing with budgets in that way. That is, of course, the irony of what is called the three per cent efficiency dividend. I reiterate that it is very easy and somewhat deceptive for the government to cut funding in real terms and then to make announcements as though it is paying for something over and above the budget.

I am happy to acknowledge the allocations the government has announced; for example, a \$6 million contribution to a project with the New York Museum of Modern Art—MOMA; a \$2 million contribution to the Western Australian Ballet's move; and a \$1 million contribution to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. However, putting \$1 million into CHOGM for cultural events is something that the government would have done anyway over and above the budget. Obviously, Lotterywest is providing the bulk of the funding for CHOGM. Lotterywest funding is mandated under the Lotteries Commission Act to be spent on culture and the arts. That is, in a sense, taxpayers' money moving directly—not at the largesse of government—from Lotterywest under that act.

I understand that \$7.9 million has been allocated to the West Australia Symphony Orchestra project. I am told that as yet only a very small amount of that has been released. This is even though the WA Symphony Orchestra has finalised the proposal and is ready to go to the detailed design stage, it needs the funds so that it can get quotes and move ahead with that project.

I note also that some weeks ago Kim Hames put out a press release referring to the number of visitors coming to Perth, in particular visitors from China. The figures he released indicate that there has been an overall increase in the number of tourists in the past 12 months. One particular group that has had a significant increase in number is business visitors to Western Australia. I put to members that business visitors are unlikely to go outside the city and are more likely to want to visit something such as a world cultural Indigenous centre if they could in the short time they are here.

I hope that members will support this motion. The government is proud that this state is setting the pace for the rest of the country economically, and I think we should be able at least to restore the loss of funding for culture and the arts that has taken place over the past two budgets.

HON MIA DAVIES (Agricultural) [2.39 pm]: I rise today to speak on this motion on behalf of the Nationals and to bring a regional flavour to the debate. I say from the outset that I am a strong supporter of culture and the arts and the benefits they bring to our communities. The positive impact they have on people as individuals or collectively participating in the arts —

What do I need to do?

Hon Adele Farina: You can't do anything.

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The PRESIDENT: Order! It appears there may be a problem with your microphone in front of your desk.

Hon MIA DAVIES: I will speak very loudly.

The PRESIDENT: Yes; that is the best we can do.

Hon MIA DAVIES: Okay; shall I start again? Oh, we are on, so I do not need to yell any more. Thank you, Mr President. I might start again just in case people did not catch my first comments.

I am rising today to speak on behalf of the Nationals on the motion and to bring a regional flavour to the debate. I would like to state from the outset that I am a strong supporter of culture and the arts and the benefits they bring to the communities. The positive impact they have on people, as individuals or as collectives, who participate in the arts is well documented, as Hon Linda Savage noted in her statement to the house. The benefits of participating in culture and the arts can range from increasing a sense of community by building social capital to getting people involved in activities. People can take a direct role in arts or they can be audience participants; it is all-inclusive.

Before I continue I would like to say that in bringing a regional flavour to this debate, I will talk about being able to access some of those arts because we in this government have tried to address some of the things we talked about this morning by taking them out into the regions. I think among our constituents—people from the Agricultural Region, the Mining and Pastoral Region and the South West Region—it has been very much appreciated that we have been able to see some of the excellent events hosted in these wonderful buildings in the Perth metropolitan area, but that we do not necessarily go to on a regular basis, if at all.

Coming from a regional community and a family that has strong sporting affiliations I would like to make the comment that access to arts and cultural programs is vitally important to bringing a balance to our communities. As I say regularly—I go to a lot of openings of art functions, exhibitions and other events that are in this space—not everyone wants to be the next Matthew Pavlich or Chris Judd.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Go easy; of course they do!

Hon MIA DAVIES: Coming from a very strong sporting family, I am sorry to say that I did not aspire to be like either of those two in the sporting world. I certainly identified more with cultural pursuits and the arts. I believe there is a very important role for the arts. My view from this government's perspective, particularly through royalties for regions, is that royalties for regions has created renewed vigour and a funding source for lots of organisations in the state to deliver some of those programs out to the regions.

I want to go back to something I said in my budget reply speech around the fact that I think there is a perception sometimes that royalties for regions is only about bricks and mortar.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: And plastic cows.

Hon MIA DAVIES: And plastic cows. That was about culture and the arts, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Is it culture or is it the arts?

Hon MIA DAVIES: It is a bit of both. We are an integrated government; we are not discriminatory.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Nice.

Hon MIA DAVIES: The misconception that we are funding only bricks and mortar is just that, a misconception. Whilst some of the things I am going to talk about today are bricks and mortar because we need to give a home to some of these things, a lot of them are around programs that are not tangible, but they produce very tangible outcomes for individuals and communities. In reminding members again about royalties for regions, the system has been set up by the government to allow the community to access funding through its local government, regional development commissions or directly through the Regional Development Council by the latest fund to be created, the Action Agenda Fund. They can go into partnership with not-for-profit groups, non-government agencies or the private sector and leverage that funding to deliver these projects. It brings lots of participants into the space. It is not decided by a central bureaucracy in Perth; it is driven very much at a community level. Anyone in the community and arts sector will tell members that that is incredibly important.

I have some rough and ready figures about what royalties for regions has delivered financially over the last three budgets for culture and the arts. In 2008–09 it was around \$6.8 million; in 2009–10, around \$15 million; and in 2010–11, around \$27 million. This is pulled from regional grants schemes and various other programs through the budget. That is a total of something close to \$52 million. As I said before, it covers bricks and mortar to create space for cultural precincts and the arts and the delivery of programs in the area.

Hon Adele Farina: How much of that was bricks and mortar?

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Hon MIA DAVIES: I do not have that figure in front of me. All the grants are listed when they are announced. Hon Adele Farina can see them as line items. I am sure they would be able to provide the member with that information. I do not have it with me at the moment, Hon Adele Farina.

To demonstrate the recognition and value placed on culture and the arts by people living in regional WA, I would like to highlight some of the projects that are worth noting. I will start close to home, in my electorate. I have talked about the Cummins Theatre before, which is an example of investment in bricks and mortar. Prior to the investment of royalties for regions, the theatre looked tired. There is a wonderful historical story attached to it. It was moved at the turn of the century from Coolgardie by someone whose name I have temporarily forgotten, but that person definitely had something to do with Cummins; it has his name on it. It did not suit the purpose for which the community was using it. In fact, in the middle of a performance something nearly fell on the head of one of the actors. It has a unique set-up behind the stage, but I am not that great on the terminology of what it is. It was literally falling to pieces, yet they have a very strong theatre group in Merredin. Without it, touring groups would not have been going into the community. Merredin is a hub for communities such as Narembeen, where people travel from to utilise it. It now has a regular schedule of productions coming through the town. It is also used with great pride by the community for significant events such as weddings and twenty-firsts. I think somebody said they would not let it out for eighteenth birthdays because they are not prepared to let the lovely new carpet get stained at this point in time, but they are willing to let it be used for twenty-firsts, wedding anniversaries and suchlike. It is a focal point for the town and has been established in conjunction with the Shire of Merredin and royalties for regions, with the local community pitching in to create this wonderful legacy for their town.

Hon Robin Chapple rose some weeks back and spoke about a film that was made around Jandamarra's life, called, I think, *Jandamarra's War* in Windjana Gorge. We are talking now about the non-bricks and mortar aspect. Royalties for regions provided funding towards sending that film on tour around the Kimberley where it has particular poignancy for communities in that region. Hon Robin Chapple spoke about the spectacular event that was put on. The gorge was lit up and the movie was shown, courtesy of royalties for regions. There are a number of other films such as *Red Dog*, and *Drift* with Sam Worthington, which is being filmed down south and which also has some royalties for regions investment. I am told that that production is bringing wonderful publicity and excitement to those regions. It is certainly highlighting tourism opportunities.

Funding of \$345 000 has been provided to create contemporary craft and design in the Pilbara to assist the Pilbara Aboriginal Arts Enterprise project to grow commercial, cultural and social capacity of the Roebourne Art Group and the Spinifex Hill Artists. That brings capacity building to groups that are increasing and expanding the depth of what they do now. I would say that, for a relatively small amount of money in the grand scheme of the state budget, that is delivering some fantastic outcomes. One of the other very exciting programs—this goes back to my earlier comments about unique and big productions that otherwise cannot go beyond the Perth metropolitan area—is the regional simulcast program that has been supported through royalties for regions and the Department of Culture and the Arts. Royalties for regions provided \$1.3 million over four years to allow regional communities to access visual and performing arts touring opportunities. These were simulcast through the state government's Westnet broadband network. This was done for the first time on 14 November last year—I understand that it is about to be replicated with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra—when regional WA enjoyed a performance of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra via simulcast to regional centres as it performed at the Perth Concert Hall. It was broadcast to Albany, Bunbury, the Goldfields, Esperance, the Cummins Theatre, Queens Park, the Walkington Theatre in Karratha and the Broome movie theatre. It was an enormous success. Hon Col Holt may be able to clarify this, but the Albany Entertainment Centre, which I understand can seat 650 people, was fully subscribed within three hours of ticketing. I think we will see a repeat of that because it opens an entirely new forum of the arts and culture into the regions —

Hon Adele Farina: All made possible because a Labor government built the centre.

Hon MIA DAVIES: That may well be the case, but we provided the funding to put something into it. It might have become a white elephant if we did not have something to go into it. It is about bringing all those things out to the regions and giving people in the member's electorate the opportunity to value and learn about what we are able to see in Perth every day.

I wanted to go back to the regional grants scheme. I talked about some of the projects that were funded for the Cummins Theatre in Merredin. In the Gascoyne, the regional grants scheme provided funding to Country Arts WA. That provides another opportunity for some of our key stakeholder arts and culture groups to access and then drive out projects because they can deliver services. They are very good at it and they have very good connections with their communities. It gives them the opportunity to access funding and put it against their own funding programs to deliver fantastic programs. In this case Country Arts WA delivered a youth arts leadership

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program that was designed to increase the engagement of young people in the arts. Funding was provided through the Great Southern Development Commission's regional grants scheme to deliver the Perth International Arts Festival program. Three weeks of the international arts festival was held in the Great Southern, another example of getting the arts out of Perth and into our regions. Funding has also been provided to Creative Albany to create an Albany music documentary film showing how the lives of people in Albany and surrounding areas are changed by their participation in local music making. I think that was a \$10 000 grant. A vast range of funds have been made available from the regional grants scheme through to the action agenda and the regional development commissions. The purpose of this is to explain that the projects are coming from those community groups, which are able to engage and seek the support of the corporate sector by talking about the importance of corporate philanthropy and being able to access those corporate dollars. It helps to have someone to kick-start that process. That is what royalties for regions is providing. I think we have seen some great outcomes from that.

In conclusion, I would like to go back to where I started. Some members on this side of the house share the enthusiasm and commitment to culture and the arts that Hon Linda Savage spoke about during her speech to this house. Through royalties for regions, in particular—that is the program that I am the most familiar with—there is evidence that some very strong connections are being made through the cultural and arts sector back into the regions. As I said, we do some wonderful things in sport but it is fantastic to have access to everything from community capacity building to being a member in an audience and being able to deliver a program into the regions. Royalties for regions has given these communities an opportunity to do that. I am very hopeful that this investment will continue to grow, especially as communities and local governments are starting to tick off some of the things that they might have spent some of their money on—more of the bricks and mortar-type projects. As every society grows, once we tick off some of those essential services in some of the communities, we can turn our mind to how we can enhance all of that. I am not saying that it needs to happen in a linear way; it should be happening together. There are probably a few priorities in regional Western Australia that have been dealt with at local government level up to this point. I think we are starting to see an increase in the number of culture and arts funding programs that are coming through royalties for regions for all levels of funding provided.

HON ADELE FARINA (South West) [2.56 pm]: I am very pleased to support the motion moved by Hon Linda Savage on this issue of funding for arts and culture. I would like to begin by reading from the Liberals' election commitment to the people of Western Australia, which stated —

A fundamental Liberal Party belief is that a vibrant cultural sector is a key part of dynamic and attractive cities around the world. It enhances our lives and provides the catalyst for the development of our towns and cities.

Regions that focus on major cultural and education investment become national and international drawcards. They become places that attract investment and people, and are transformed into locations where people want to live, work and grow.

The Liberal Party will build on Western Australia's resource-driven growth, by ensuring that investment in the arts is integrated with science, research and education programs. This approach will provide sustained learning and growth in our understanding of ourselves, and our place in the world. It will be the point of difference established by the Liberal Party, as a key part of a major review of planning for our cities and regions.

As better economic managers, the Liberal Party will deliver improved arts infrastructure solutions, located and planned to identify and leverage opportunities for education. We will actively seek partnerships between Government arts, research and education programs and industry, research and education bodies. Our results will ensure win-win outcomes socially, economically and for our environment.

It went on to list the deficiencies in the arts and cultural sector in this state. It went on to say —

The Perth Cultural Centre is in much need of revitalisation.

...

A Liberal Government will conduct a review of the cultural centre precinct ...

In relation to the WA Museum, the document stated —

A Liberal Government will ensure that the WA Museum functions are again rejoined in a public facility. It will retain and develop the museum's scientific expertise with full public access to research collections and staff for visitors of all ages.

That is the promise that the Liberals went to the last state election with. What the people of Western Australia got with the first budget delivered by the Liberal government was a three per cent efficiency dividend cut to the

arts and culture sector in this state. Rather than getting on and doing what it promised to do, the government hit the arts and cultural sector with a massive three per cent efficiency dividend cut, and a range of other cuts as well.

The message from people in the arts and cultural sector that came through after each budget was that the budgets under the Liberal government, despite its promises in the policy document before the election, were disappointing. People were disappointed at the lack of funding that had been committed by this Liberal–National government to arts and culture, despite all the promises that had been made to that sector prior to the election. One of the comments was that the not-for-profit arts organisations had been offered a 1.8 per cent indexation in a marketplace where business costs, including wages, were running at three times that level. That basically meant that there was no capacity for growth; in fact, it was a step backwards, because we are not keeping up with costs and wage growth. That is something that this government fails to understand: the need to increase funding to ensure that sectors, particularly the non-profit sector, can continue to offer what they are currently offering. However, with the sort of cuts they have sustained and lack of real indexation to meet CPI increases, they are really struggling.

Despite identifying the need to have a review of the cultural precinct and new museum, we found there is no money for visionary capital works like a decent museum building. The Liberals promised a new museum almost four years ago, but they promptly removed the \$500 million budget allocation that the former Labor government had in the budget to build a new museum. Under a Labor government there was \$500 million to build a new museum. This Liberal government, despite going to the election with a whole host of promises, including a brand new museum, immediately hit them with a three per cent cut through the efficiency dividend, and also slashed the \$500 million that had been allocated by the former Labor government to build the museum. Also, statements by the Minister for Culture and the Arts have given the arts and culture sector the impression that a new museum will be at least six years off, if not longer.

Clearly, the government has failed to live up to its commitment to the people of Western Australia in this matter. While I am not arguing that the government has not provided any funding at all to this sector—clearly it has—and while I note the comments of Hon Mia Davies about some funding that has been provided to the sector, it is disingenuous for members opposite to indicate with this hand they are going to slash the budget and then with the other hand to hand out a little bit of money and expect to be congratulated for doing that. We are seeing cost shifting happening here. Budgets in the departments and the portfolio areas are being cut and then the funding is being rebadged as royalties for regions funding and being handed out under that banner. If Hon Mia Davies wanted to say that on top of the money they are continuing to fund in the departments, they are also handing out this funding under royalties for regions, that would be a great thing—not that I am knocking royalties for regions, because I would much rather have it under that banner than not at all, as I am sure is the case with everyone else in the sector. But members opposite need to be honest when they stand up and make those statements. They cannot ignore that they have slashed money out of the budget. Hon Mia Davies mentioned the money that was available to ScreenWest for *Drift*, which is a great production and fantastic that it is happening in my electorate, but she ignored the fact that ScreenWest had its funding slashed by nearly \$2 million. It is important also to put that on the record. The government is taking with one hand and giving less with the other hand, and then expects to be congratulated for it.

The one thing that comes through from the sector time and again is that this government, despite its election commitment, has no vision and no plan for arts and culture in this state. There is no overarching arts policy and no overarching regional arts policy. It is fine to hand out little trinkets of money here and there, but the government needs to have a plan and a vision, and an implementation plan for how it will deliver that vision, otherwise it is not helping the sector at all; it is just providing trinkets of money. There might be some little productions, which are all terrific, but the sector is desperately crying out for an overarching policy, direction and vision. That is what this government has failed to deliver.

I want to quote from an article by Suzie Haslehurst, who is the chairwoman of Country Arts WA, which was printed in *The West Australian* country arts lift-out on 13 July 2011, in which she states —

... at a time when regional development plans are being created at both state and national levels the profile of the arts in these plans remains essentially invisible.

Yet more and more, we understand as a society that the arts play a central role in quality of life. This creative and diverse sector delivers benefits that go well beyond the making of work that engages, challenges or confirms our views of the world. In a regional setting, the arts can improve community cohesion, drive tourism, deliver economic growth, and improve health and well-being for people of all ages.

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She goes on to say —

A recent inquiry into the mental health and well-being of WA children and young people recommended increased participation in the arts, sport, and recreation—particularly in regional and remote areas. Other research has linked participation in arts and culture with increased learning outcomes for disadvantaged children.

Yet the arts are still not recognised for their significance in communities facing unprecedented challenges that are rich with opportunity.

Then she goes on to say —

Currently, there is no overarching regional arts policy at either state or federal level.

With no policy, there is no road map, no vision and a limited voice for regional arts. In the regions, several local authorities are establishing arts and cultural policies with the assistance of organisations such as Country Arts WA and Community Arts Network.

Regional Arts Australia is working with the Australia Council for the Arts to develop a national regional arts framework. However, without an overall State policy, each of these policies operates in isolation and there continues to be no united voice for the WA regional arts. It's up to those of us living and working in regional Western Australia to let everybody know how and why the arts are important in our communities, to increase understanding of the barriers to engagement in arts and culture in the bush, and to ask governments to adopt arts policy that is visionary and responsive.

That is the problem that we have with what is happening under this government. Rather than putting money into our established departments so that they can develop these overarching policies and road maps and implement those policy positions, the government is handing out trinkets of money through royalties for regions funding. That is fine for those projects that actually get funding; I am not disputing that. But the problem is that it does not provide any long-term vision and no plan or strategy has been developed to provide sustained and continued growth of arts and culture in regional WA and across the state. That is what is lacking and is one of the drastic problems with taking money out of departments through the cost shifting that is happening.

Hon Mia Davies: Are you aware of the conference being held in Geraldton by Country Arts WA next week —

Hon ADELE FARINA: Yes.

Hon Mia Davies: — through the auspices of royalties for regions funding so they can hold their conference as a regional arts community?

Hon ADELE FARINA: That is great, but the government has slashed the department's funding when the department is needed to drive the development of the overarching strategy and implementation of the road map to deliver that. Those conferences are great and, of course, they are welcome. It is a great opportunity for people in regional WA to have their say about what they want as a policy, but at the end of the day we still need someone to drive that policy, and when the government slashes funding from government departments, which are the drivers of those policies and their implementation, it means that all these conferences and discussions end up going nowhere. That is the concern. I really think, given what you have promised—not Hon Mia Davies in particular—but what the Liberals promised in their election policy, they really need to look at what their commitment was to the people of Western Australia and to deliver on that commitment. I think they have failed miserably in that respect.

We have not yet had an explanation for why the economic powerhouse of this nation had to slash \$500 million of money allocated by the Labor government to build a new museum and it has not got any plans afoot for when it will deliver this new museum that the Liberals promised in their election document. No explanation has been given for why that funding was cut, and there is no time frame and no plan for getting on and building what they promised to build. The bottom line is this is what happens when there is no vision and no road map for implementation.

What this government needs to get on and do is deliver that. It needs to stop cutting the funding from the Department of Culture and the Arts, so that it is able to direct resources to develop an overarching policy for not only Perth, but also regional Western Australia. The government needs to provide the department with the resources it needs so that it can get on and implement that strategy, and ensure the sustainable, long-term growth of the culture and the arts sector in this state. Handing out trinkets of money is great for those people who succeed in getting that funding allocated to them, but it makes it impossible for the sector to forward plan, and grow, and to ensure a vibrant culture and the arts sector in this state. We really need the government to do what it was elected to do—that is, develop a strategy, and develop a vision, and then get on and implement it.

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HON COL HOLT (South West) [3.10 pm]: I rise briefly to add my comments to this motion on culture and the arts funding in this state. Notice of this motion was given on 16 November 2010. That was probably very good timing, because that is around the time when budgets are being talked about, so there was the possibility that some sort of response would be given in the 2011–12 budget, as I think there has been. Certainly from the Nationals' perspective, there definitely has been a response to this motion out of the royalties for regions budget, because extra funding has been put into culture and the arts, especially in regional Western Australia. My colleague Hon Mia Davies talked a lot about culture and the arts. I want to focus on one section of that, namely, the culture and arts events that are held in regional Western Australia, because those events are as much about the culture and fabric of the community as they are about any other part of culture and the arts.

There are two major streams of funding from royalties for regions for culture and the arts. A large lump of money—\$40 million over four years—has been provided under the royalties for regions events program; and a smaller amount of money has been provided under the regional events scheme, which is to support some of the established festivals and events that take place in regional WA. Just to go back to the royalties for regions events program, that funding will enable people who run events in the regions, or who want to take events into the regions, to take them to a new level. Often a lot of the events that are held in the community are run by volunteers and community groups that run a very lean budget, on the smell of an oily rag, and keep presenting these events year after year. This funding will enable these groups to take a bigger, broader step with their event or festival so that it can become more self-sustaining and therefore more long-lasting. That funding is really about raising the profile of events, and assisting communities to not only develop but attract and market their events.

One of the events that has been earmarked for this funding to date is the Exmouth GAMEX fishing tournament. Another event is the Shinju Matsuri Festival in Broome. I do not know how many members have been to that event, but I am sure some members have been there often. Another event is the BHP Billiton Aquatic Super Series, which was announced recently, because there will be some regional events held around that event. The Paspaley Beach Polo event in Broome is part of that funding round as well. These are all events that have their own unique appeal to people, and that add to the fabric of our communities.

Some of the other events that should also be mentioned are events that have been around for a while, but they need an injection of funds to take them to a new level. Those events include the Nannup Music Festival; Blues at Bridgetown, which is into about its eighteenth year; and the Boyup Brook Country Music Festival, which is the second largest country music festival in Australia behind Tamworth. Now that there is potential to inject some more funding into that festival, it may even become the largest country music festival in Australia, and that would certainly be a good thing for this state and for the people of Boyup Brook. There are some really exciting plans to build a centre of excellence in Boyup Brook for country music. That will provide a cultural hub for country music in that town. Those sorts of plans are starting to come to fruition. The people in these communities who are working on these things now see some light at the end of the tunnel, with the possibility of getting their events funded, mainly through royalties for regions, and that is a very good initiative by them. The Manjimup Cherry Festival is another event that has been going for a while now, which is run also by volunteers who try to make the most out of their volunteer hours and their volunteer expertise. This will provide them with another opportunity to get some extra funding to further build that festival. I think the Ord Valley Muster this year was also funded through this program. I do not know how many members have been to that event, but it is a fantastic regional event—in fact, a national event now, because people come from all over Australia to attend that festival.

If people keep an eye out, they will see some very exciting announcements around that event funding for regional WA, and I suspect that in every region of the state, there will be some opportunity for members and the community to attend those functions.

I also want to talk briefly about the smaller grants scheme, which was given a \$300 000 injection of funds through royalties for regions. That scheme will fund 39 festivals this year. It will not fund the entire event, but it will assist and contribute to the ongoing costs and therefore play a very valuable role.

Hon Adele Farina: How much funding is in that?

Hon COL HOLT: It is \$300 000 from royalties for regions this year.

Hon Adele Farina: Is that for the whole of the state?

Hon COL HOLT: That is just for the smaller grants scheme. I do not know whether there is any other funding from consolidated revenue, but there is an extra \$300 000 of funding for regional events. I think there is also other funding for other events.

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Hon Adele Farina: In the south west, we already had it before royalties for regions, of course. It was provided by the South West Development Commission.

Hon COL HOLT: Yes, and I think that is really important, because the south west obviously has more people than a lot of other regions, and a lot of expertise.

Hon Adele Farina: It has fantastic events and festivals.

Hon COL HOLT: Yes, because the people who are living there have greater access to funding, and greater access to expertise. What I am talking about here is taking it to the next level and providing some funding to do that. I was in Busselton a couple of weeks ago for the CinéfestOZ. Did Hon Adele Farina make that?

Hon Adele Farina: No. I was in Bunbury at another event, so I did not attend that.

Hon COL HOLT: That was part-funded by royalties for regions, and although they managed to gather a whole heap of funds from other sources, royalties for regions and the state government injected some funds into that event to make it a great event. I do not know whether any other members were there, but Diver Dan was there — Several members interjected.

Hon COL HOLT: I can tell members that he looks very good for a 45-year-old bloke—incredibly good! He is not actually that tall; he is only about my height, I think. That is just a bit of useless information for members. We saw a film, and Fred Schepisi was there, the director of that film. It was an excellent premiere of that film in Western Australia. Those sorts of things really add value to the community. There was a red carpet event, where people walked down the red carpet. It was quite exciting to be there. That all adds to the culture of Busselton in that instance.

Another event that has received some of that funding is Discover the Round, which is really about the Kalgoorlie race round. That event has been around for a long time and it has a real cultural significance in the Goldfields. The Karratha Community Celebration and the Funtabulous Bunbury Kids Fest received some funds. The Southern Art and Craft Trail also received some funds. I do not know whether any members have been exposed to that, but basically it is a series of arts and crafts mini-events in towns throughout the Great Southern. I remember first coming across it in Frankland, of all places, where basically four or five ladies from the community sat in the hall displaying their arts and crafts, and people could go from there to Mt Barker, Cranbrook and out to Wellstead, which all had similar themes. The trail is about exposing the people who practise arts and crafts in those communities, giving them a chance to display their wares and link up and get some, I guess, capacity to make it a bigger event than just a one-off event at the Frankland hall. Therefore, the art trail got some money. I will go through a few more events that received funding to point out that this goes around all the regions—namely, the Geraldton Greenough Sunshine Festival, Flourish Margaret River, the Goldfields Spring Festival, Ballet Under the Stars in Broome, the Yallingup Surfilm Festival, Mount Barker Grapes and Gallops, the Wind on Water Festival in Geraldton, the Taste Great Southern Festival, the Mandurah Crab Fest, the Margaret River Wine Region Festival, the Ningaloo Whaleshark Festival and the York Gourmet Food and Wine Festival. They are some of the 39 events that received some funding through that. We do not know whether those events would have continued without that injection of funds, but certainly the regional events scheme is a well sought after fund. There is probably more that we can do, but that injection of \$300 000 to help those smaller events is certainly paying dividends in the regions, I believe, particularly for the fabric of the community and the culture that we want to promote in regional Western Australia. Just because there is some distance between people and some of those events does not mean that people should miss out. Therefore, I encourage all members to look out for those festivals and make the most of travelling to those regions to participate because this is about not only, obviously, the members of the community who live there, but also tourism and the people who come to interact with the local community. I encourage all members to keep an eye out and if they would like, I will make sure that they are kept informed about events in the regions so that they can attend.

HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (East Metropolitan) [3.22 pm]: It has been very interesting to hear contributions from members about the funding and the availability of culture and the arts in this state. The general impression I get is that there is disappointment about the lack of effort from the Barnett government in its support for culture and the arts. I have to say that a society without culture and the arts is indeed a society that is very much lacking. There is no doubt that much more needs to happen.

Honourable members before me raised the issue of wanting answers to what is happening in culture and the arts because something does not add up. We have a Premier who tells us that we are living in a booming economy and we have a state that is going gung-ho. Obviously, given that sort of rhetoric, the expectation follows that we would notice some change, some community benefit and some community dividend from the boom that is occurring up north. It may well be reflected in many ways. It may be that major infrastructure projects will be

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undertaken and there will be massive expenditure on schools and significant growth in the arts and culture, but none of that is happening. We are not seeing any of that, so it is not surprising that people increasingly ask: what is going on? We have only to look at the budget papers to know what is going on, because the budget papers do not have any increase in funding for culture and the arts; there are significant reductions in funding for culture and the arts—never mind the point that was made by Hon Adele Farina, who talked about the new Western Australian Museum. The fact is that the new Museum was in the budget at \$500 million, but it is now not in the budget and we have to ask ourselves why. In fact, it is foreshadowed to be in the budget but, as I understand it, not until 2013–14. In 2013–14 this government may not even be in office!

Hon Simon O'Brien: Have you no faith? Where is your optimism!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I must say that when I read that, I thought it was the most ridiculous thing I ever read. Did this government go to the election promising that there would be a new museum? I cannot remember because I cannot ever remember seeing the policy —

Hon Simon O'Brien: Just make it up then if you can't remember!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I cannot ever remember seeing the policy about culture and the arts from the now Barnett government. I think that Hon Adele Farina is quite right; there is no policy. Basically, what has happened is that not only is there not a dividend from this so-called boom, at the same time —

Several government members interjected.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Why don't you just argue amongst yourselves!

Although there is no benefit from the so-called boom, we have the Economic Audit Committee. That committee sits in a tower somewhere, and it is like a huge pencil sharpener in that it just shaves off a little bit more and a little bit more. I can tell from the quality of a number of things around this place that things are just being shaved off a little bit more, a little bit more. I must say that this government is doing that to every single agency right across government. There is a fallacy that there was a one-off three per cent efficiency dividend in the first year of this government and for some reason the government stopped shaving—do not believe it! It is alive! The government is still shaving and members have only to look at every department's budget to see that, but it is truly reflected in the culture and the arts budget. I reckon that the government has done this to culture and the arts because it is a soft target. The government peels back and takes away the culture and the arts in a community, but what else is there to life other than celebrating one's culture and appreciating the arts? As somebody who enjoys the arts, particularly painting, I can tell members that my life is considerably enhanced because I have my love of art.

Hon Helen Bullock: They should try!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Members should all try it—absolutely! Everywhere we look there is the huge pencil sharpener and it is shaving. I will quickly go through some of the shaving that it has done in the Department of Culture and the Arts. Here we go; we have culture and the arts in the budget papers for 2011–12. For 2012, the total appropriation for the culture and the arts budget is \$132.2 million. Guess what? The shaver has come out and in 2012–13 we have a projection of \$112.1 million. That is a significant drop. Going across the forward estimates, in 2013–14 it is \$114.8 million and in 2014–15 it is \$116.8 million. That has dropped from \$132.2 million. That is no social dividend; that is a kick in the backside.

Hon Liz Behjat: It's an efficiency dividend.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The member might think that it is an efficiency dividend, but I can tell her that nothing is happening out there in this community to bring the community together and to lift the spirits of people who are doing it particularly tough because of the cost-of-living imposts. Let us look at where these cuts are being made. We see that the 2011–12 budget for the Art Gallery of Western Australia had an appropriation to the tune of \$16.5 million. Over the 2012–13 forward estimates, it is down to \$9.8 million; for 2013–14, it is \$10.1 million; and for 2014–15, it is \$10.4 million. That is approximately a 70 per cent drop by 2014 from the 2011–12 figure. The Library Board of Western Australia was appropriated to the tune of \$31.7 million in 2011–12, and it maintains funding, so it is probably not my best example, but it does dip by \$1 million in 2012–13 and in 2013–14. The sense we get from these figures is that we should believe that what we think is happening is actually happening, because the totals, in terms of the effective allocation by service agency, drop considerably from \$132.66 million down to \$116.8 million in 2014–15.

This is an agency that has as one of its desired outcomes a creative, sustainable and accessible culture in the arts sector. Firstly, it is not sustainable because funding is actually heading backwards rather than forwards; secondly, it is not accessible because the government is simply not funding culture and the arts. We cannot really access something that is not there. Thirdly, at the end of the day, it is very difficult for performers and artists to

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actually be creative in this sort of environment. They say that adversity is the mother of invention, so one would think there would be a lot of creativity going on in WA, but that clearly does not really apply when it comes to the arts.

Hon Liz Behjat interjected.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: He might think so; I am not commenting on Mr Carboni. I do not know Mr Carboni. All I am telling members is that there is a serious problem here, and the problem is that not only are culture and the arts no longer being funded in this state to the level that they once were, but also there have actually been significant cuts to those budgets. I can only put that down to the requirement by the Economic Audit Committee to continue to shave off and pare back any money that agencies have available to them.

Hon Liz Behjat: We were still able to bring the Peggy Guggenheim exhibition; it didn't go anywhere else.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm): Members, there is ample time left for all members who desire to have a few words to say to do so at the appropriate time.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: What is particularly concerning is the lack of arts industry support. The arts industry is very, very important to the cultural fibre of this state, and there are many people involved in the arts who look to that support from government. We have seen a funding reduction since the 2010–11 budget in arts industry support for the development, funding and promotion of the arts industry; we have seen it drop from a total of \$43.1 million to \$34.1 million.

Members have talked about what a great hit *Red Dog* has been. It was a low-budget film and, as I understand it, it has netted more than \$10 million. It is a great return on investment and puts Western Australian filmmakers on the national and international stage. However, there has been a drop in funding to screen production industry support; it has gone down from \$3.8 million in 2010–11—which was not a huge amount, in any event—to \$3.6 million in 2011–12.

I look through these budget papers and ask myself, “Is there any glimmer of hope in any of them? Is there any glimmer of hope that I might be able to say something positive or something good about the funding of culture and the arts by this government in this state?” Clearly, the answer is a categorical no: “computer says no”! There is absolutely no glimmer of hope.

I want to touch on the new Western Australian Museum. I think it is absolutely incredible, given that we had \$500 million in the budget for it, that the government has chosen to take that money out of the budget; goodness knows where the government has put it, because it has not put it anywhere else in the arts. It must have put it somewhere else; it must have hidden it somewhere, or just lost it through incompetence. The new museum is expected to cost up to \$470 million if it is built within the next six or seven years. I would have to say that that time frame is probably a bit rubbery anyway, because we do not know where the economy is going to be in six or seven years. Having said that, this is another example of this government, after three years, not delivering anything concrete while promising to start building within three years, with the construction costs included within the 2013–14 budget. People who enjoy going to the Museum would and should feel very much let down by the fact that there has been absolutely no activity, apart from a design competition for the new \$470 million museum.

I will read from an article by Stephen Bevis that appeared in *The West Australian* on Wednesday, 1 June. It states —

A new WA museum is expected to cost up to \$470 million if it is built within the next six or seven years, according to Culture and Arts Minister John Day.

During a visit to the demolition site of the old Francis Street building yesterday, Mr Day outlined the projected cost of a new complex.

He said the Government would launch an international design competition next year after an initial \$5 million planning process, funded in last month's State Budget.

Mr Day expected building to start in three years and said funding for construction should be included in the 2013–14 Budget.

Quite frankly, I have to say that he should be ashamed of that; that is not an announcement that people would look forward to. People would look forward to an announcement in which the minister, having missed his opportunity within the first three years of this government, says that he will make money available and that as soon as there is a winner of the design competition, the project will start and will be fast-tracked. What better

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time to build it? At the end of the day, we have a depressed or very patchy building and construction sector out there.

Hon Simon O'Brien: We've got a massive capital works program!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: We have a patchy building and construction sector, and that is exactly what I have said. I think this is an absolute joke, as does Alec Coles, Chief Executive Officer of the WA Museum. Well, I should not say that, because that might be wrong, but he actually said that more than 400 000 people visit the Perth Cultural Centre each year and that investment was desperately needed. Clearly, Alec Coles is trying to be very polite in giving the government a hurry-on to move on this initiative.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You just accused him of saying something he's never said!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: No. I then corrected it for *Hansard*.

Hon Simon O'Brien: So you're just making it up as you go along. This is a serious promise.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I just say for *Hansard* that I will read it again —

WA Museum director Alec Coles said more than 400,000 people visited the Perth Cultural Centre site each year and the investment was desperately needed.

To me “desperately needed” indicates that there is some sort of imperative to move it along.

Hon Simon O'Brien: That's a bit different from what you first said he said.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: All right.

I also want to touch on the culling of some art initiatives that was announced in May this year. An article in the *The Weekend West* states —

Arts Minister John Day has signalled a culling of the nearly 50 subsidised WA arts organisations to give the survivors a bigger share of a shrinking money pie.

Mr Day would not nominate which organisations ought to be merged or dropped from the State's grants system but said the Department of Culture and the Arts would hold consultations over the next few months.

It would be interesting to see how the arts minister has gone with that culling, as I have not had a chance to follow that through. However, if we took a sum of money from 50 viable arts organisations, the chances are that a significant number of them may no longer be viable. Of course, it begs the question: how is that culling to the public benefit and how is it to the benefit of growing a strong, healthy and vibrant culture and arts sector? What a ridiculous and stupid thing to do! The only reason that I think a minister would go down that path would be if there was pressure on the minister to do that to find savings.

I go back to the issue I referred to earlier; that is, the role of the Economic Audit Committee across all government agencies and indeed in the agency under consideration at the moment. The minister readily admitted in the article in *The Weekend West* on Saturday, 21 May 2011 the following —

Such a review puts pressure on those in similar fields like Buzz Dance Theatre and Steps Youth Dance, visual arts and design bodies Artsource and FORM, performance-writing groups Stages and the Australian Writers Guild (WA), and Black Swan State Theatre Company and the Perth Theatre Company.

I must say that a very good question to be asked of the Minister for Culture and the Arts, given that he announced that back in May, would be: how many organisations lost their funding, how much funding did each organisation lose and what is the net impact on the cultural mix or the arts mix within the WA culture and the arts field? Perhaps a member of this place knows the answer.

The only other point I want to make is that everyone is raving about the movie *Red Dog*. It is a very interesting film. I have not seen it myself, but my neighbour went to see it and he said that it is a great film because it is about a man and a dog and the experiences he has on a trip, and about all the people or the characters that they catch up with. I find it a bit hard to imagine that a movie about a man, a dog and a few experiences could actually net \$10 million!

Hon Robyn McSweeney: You should read the story of the dog. It is a really good story from the north west and the dog was called “Red Dog”.

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Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I am sure it is. I am just telling members and I have already admitted that I have not read the story and I do not know much about it but I do know it is about a man and a dog.

Hon Simon O'Brien: It won't stop you talking about it, though, will it?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: It has never stopped me before!

I think the great thing about it is probably that it is about the scenery of wide open spaces, and of unusual characters that make up the Australian character and psyche. These are the things which we take for granted but which are an integral part of being Australian and of our culture—things such as the wide open spaces, the red dirt and the camp fires outside in the middle of nowhere. I say that because I have had people from France visiting my family in the past few weeks and they have had an enormous amount of joy in understanding Australian culture. They expressed an enormous amount of interest in some of the simplest cultural and artistic things. That is something we should not underestimate for international markets. Indeed it is something we perhaps do not think about ourselves consciously, but certainly I know that they are the things in Australian culture that make me proud to be a part of this great country. If we do not have culture and arts, we do not have much. It is very important that we preserve them, it is important that we protect them and it is important that we promote them. All of those things require funding from the state government, and I call on the government to lift its game in respect of culture and the arts.

HON LYNN MacLAREN (South Metropolitan) [3.46 pm]: I want to make a few comments on this motion. I want to begin, possibly following on from Hon Ljiljana Ravlich's comments, by reflecting on how movies can move us. I want to reflect on the fundamental role that arts and culture play in our society. It is hard to overstate the importance of arts and culture, as their benefits are interwoven through all aspects of our lives. On a personal level, culture and the arts are a means through which we can expand our horizons, deepen our understanding and nurture our spirit. I think those comments have been made by several speakers on this motion thus far.

Creative expression says a lot about who we are, and it challenges us to see things from a different perspective. Therefore, it is a valuable means of learning not just about ourselves but also about others. When we look at the role of arts and culture from this perspective, it is not surprising that the process of creating art has been found to be therapeutic. It guarantees access to and participation in the arts for people who are disadvantaged, such as those with disabilities or those in prisons. It provides a concrete way of engaging with groups that are traditionally hard to connect with. The importance of creative expression for children is perhaps more important now than ever. We live in a time when children are often over-scheduled and are subject to many pressures to perform. Artistic endeavours allow children to express themselves freely, and this in turn helps them to make sense of their world and build resilience. This is an important quality of character that will be required in this time of transition and change. At a community level, the availability and presence of art and creative expression is proportionate to the vibrancy of a town or a city. The collective benefits are enormous. Not only is a community where arts and culture abound better to live in, but also it is more attractive to visit. There is even a name for this kind of tourism. It is called "cultural tourism". It is a substantial market, and one that we would benefit from tapping into on a much larger scale than we already do. As well as enabling Western Australians to access arts and cultural events from around the country and around the world, I believe we have a responsibility to ensure that our local talent is acknowledged and nurtured so that our story can be told.

I have spoken on this before, members. We have a wealth of talent in both WA and Australia generally in the present and have had in the past. My colleague Hon Robin Chapple has spoken extensively about the rock art of the Dampier Peninsula. I have visited this area and I found it to be truly awe-inspiring. Some of these art works date back a staggering 30 000 years. For those members who have not visited that area, it is spinechilling to walk through those valleys. What a great testament it is to the Aboriginal people and their culture. We are privileged to be the home of the most unique and largest rock collection in the world, yet I dispute whether we afford it the proper reverence it deserves. We must be flexible enough to support initiatives as they present themselves. In this regard I cannot help but lament the demise of the acclaimed literary journal *Indigo Journal*. I have spoken about this before. One of Australia's most esteemed authors, David Malouf, made the following observation about the journal which, according to my notes reads —

... it was important for a great many writers and others in WA, and to people here who used it to see what was going on 'on the other shore'. It's almost impossible for a magazine that has serious goals, and wants to make a mark, to raise the sort of private funds that will make that possible, and governments these days simply have no interest.

It is inexplicable to me why a nationally respected and successful literary journal has no place in the government's plan for art and culture in this state. The end of the journal is an opportunity lost. Seventy per cent of *Indigo's* print run went to bookshops outside the state and this led to an unexpected success in promoting WA

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writers across the country. As Australians, we have an outstanding track record in sporting achievements. Hon Mia Davies mentioned earlier that sports stars are some of the most recognised and celebrated members of our community and, internationally, Australia's sporting prowess is widely recognised. It is something we are deservedly proud of. I will argue that there is also room to promote our other achievements. Children should know that a career in culture and the arts is something that they can aspire to and that their endeavours will be recognised, supported and celebrated. What better way to showcase the multi-faceted society that makes Australia, particularly Western Australia, a wonderful place to live in? As parliamentarians, we have a key role in ensuring that artists and cultural institutions receive adequate funding and recognition. It is funny how we often weigh them up—arts and culture versus sport and recreation—when in fact they are both important aspects of our full character.

The Greens (WA)'s position is that arts and culture are not adequately funded in Western Australia and we are missing opportunities to add to the vitality of our state. I have mentioned that it is also an economic driver and, surely, even the economic rationalist thinking in this state would take advantage of that. As such, the efficiency dividend has been applied to an already underfunded sector and it should be removed. I support the motion strongly. I welcome it and I thank Hon Linda Savage for bringing it to our attention; indeed, the government should compensate for cuts made in the 2009–10, 2010–11 and, indeed, now the 2011–12 budgets.

HON HELEN MORTON (East Metropolitan — Minister for Mental Health) [3.53 pm]: I am happy to have the opportunity to provide the Council with some information on all the government's good work and achievements in the arts.

Hon Ljiljana Ravlich: It shouldn't take long.

Hon HELEN MORTON: Indeed, this motion has been moved at an appropriate time, as the government's focus on arts and culture continues and has recently been further demonstrated with a significant increase in funding for 2011–12. The amount of \$153.5 million for the 2011–12 culture and the arts budget is an increase of \$8.6 million on last year.

Hon Adele Farina: On the previous year when it was slashed!

Hon HELEN MORTON: The state government has also allocated \$1 million annually to fund a cultural events package and a further \$1 million over four years to support the Perth Fashion Festival. The events package will go towards attracting a range of large-scale culture and arts events for the people of Perth to enjoy and engage in with our city. The continued support for the Perth Fashion Festival will help it cement further WA's position as a premier fashion destination. In addition to this, an additional \$6 million has been allocated in 2011–12 to see quality services and programs continue to be delivered through the WA Museum, the Art Gallery of WA, the State Library of WA and the Perth Theatre Trust, and funding towards site selection for a new state records repository.

Funding levels to the government's recurrent funded arts organisations have been maintained and are indexed annually. In fact, since 2007, recurrent funding to the core 49 funded arts organisations has increased from \$14 173 453 to \$17 170 727 in 2011—an increase of \$2 997 274 or a 21.15 per cent increase. I can confirm that the state's 49 funded arts organisations have not experienced cuts in either the 2009–10 or 2010–11 budgets, or, in fact, in the latest 2011–12 budget.

Hon Sue Ellery: Yes they have. The three per cent is a rolling cut.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon HELEN MORTON: In addition, I can advise that 12 per cent of all successful applications to the royalties for regions grants scheme to date have been for the arts and heritage sector. It should be noted that the government is always looking to deliver the maximum public benefit for culture and arts investment. The Minister for Culture and the Arts will keep this in mind when considering further funding.

Hon Adele Farina: Where is the \$800 million for the museum?

Hon HELEN MORTON: Western Australia is a more vibrant place, thanks to this government. Many in the community will be aware of some major events over the past year, including the WA Museum's successful exhibition *A Day in Pompeii*, which attracted more than 113 000 people, and *AC/DC Australia's Family Jewels*, which attracted more than 75 000 people, including many first-time visitors to the museum. Those major events also include the *Peggy Guggenheim: A Collection in Venice* exhibition, the first of the great collections of the world initiative in partnership with Eventscorp, which attracted more than 50 000 visitors; the exclusive Perth season of *The Graduate*, starring Jerry Hall; and the simulcast Berlin Philharmonic orchestra from the Perth Concert Hall to more than 10 000 people throughout the state funded partly from royalties for regions. Infrastructure created for this event is now able to be used on an ongoing basis such as for the recent telecast of

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the Black Swan State Theatre Company's performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* throughout various venues around WA. There has also been a large investment in cultural infrastructure by the government, which includes opportunities for both creating and experiencing art and cultural activities, including \$18.6 million over the next four years to continue the activation and revitalisation of the Perth Cultural Centre; the completion and opening in the past six months of the Albany Entertainment Centre and of the State Theatre Centre of Western Australia, which will bring great benefits to the community; the restoration of the facade of His Majesty's Theatre; \$5 million of funding for further planning of the state's new museum to be located in the revitalised Perth Cultural Centre; the current demolition of the WA Museum's Francis Street building; and the facade restoration of the Art Gallery of Western Australia. The revitalised Perth Cultural Centre continues to be a hub of activity with a strong list of events that to date have seen the government support the St Jerome's Laneway festival, Fringe World, and the hosting of a family open day that coincided with the opening of the State Theatre Centre. This year the Art Gallery of Western Australia will present the fourth year of its Indigenous Art Awards and the second exclusive great collections of the world exhibition *Princely Treasures: European Masterpieces 1600–1800* from London's Victoria and Albert Museum. As part of the Perth Concert Hall's world orchestra series, the state government, through the Perth Theatre Trust, is supporting the visit to Perth for the first time of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in late October will also see a \$2.45 million event held in the Perth Cultural Centre, which will be known as the people's space. The cultural event is being called the Commonwealth Festival and will provide an excellent opportunity to celebrate this historic occasion with an eight-day festival event featuring international performers, local artists and free family activities.

We look forward to other exceptional events in 2012, including the WA Museum presenting its major exhibition celebrating the life of Heath Ledger and the Art Gallery of Western Australia's first exhibition from New York's Museum of Modern Art. What an incredible coup for this city and state to have secured such a prestigious and exclusive partnership. The \$6 million funding announced in the state budget means that the Art Gallery of Western Australia will be the only venue outside the United States to host these exhibitions. The government is committed to providing the WA public with every opportunity to experience and participate in arts and cultural activities. As I said at the outset, funding to the arts has been increasing over the time of this government. In addition, over the past three years the Liberal–National government has actively sought to attract high-profile cultural events for all Western Australians to enjoy. The result of working across government in partnership has seen WA host exclusive arts and cultural events that are enlivening our city and state.

Amendment to Motion

Hon HELEN MORTON: I move —

To delete all the words after “house” and insert —

applauds the government for increasing funding to culture and the arts in Western Australia in the 2011–12 budget.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm): Order, members!

Hon HELEN MORTON: I feel that I should repeat that amendment because I do not think anybody heard it.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Before you do, I will bring the house to order so that at least I can hear it and I trust Hansard has a remote chance.

Hon HELEN MORTON: It states —

To delete all the words after “house” and insert —

applauds the government for increasing funding to culture and the arts in Western Australia in the 2011–12 budget.

Point of Order

Hon SUE ELLERY: I seek clarification, Mr Deputy President. My understanding of an amendment was that it could not be expressed in terms that were completely opposite to the original proposition that was before the house. That is not an amendment, as I understand it. I ask you to read the amendment again. I ask you to advise me how the amendment, as I heard the member reading it out, is not against standing orders.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm): Are you suggesting to me that it completely changes the intent of this motion?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Mr Deputy President, as I heard the member read it out—I have not heard you read it out but I understood what I heard and I do not have a copy in front of me—it was completely opposite to the motion

Extract from *Hansard*

[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 7 September 2011]

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Hon Linda Savage; Hon Mia Davies; Hon Adele Farina; Hon Col Holt; Hon Ljiljana Ravlich; Deputy President; Hon Lynn MacLaren; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Sue Ellery

before the house. If that is not the case, you will read it out to me and I will hear that it is not the case. If it is the case that it is completely the opposite, I seek your advice on how it does not offend standing orders. Perhaps we could get a copy.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Before we get the copies, I will read the amended motion from the Minister for Mental Health and then we will get copies circulated. The Minister for Mental Health has moved to amend the motion as follows —

To delete all the words after “house” and insert —

I will read the motion as the minister proposes to amend it.

Hon SUE ELLERY: With respect, Mr Deputy President, can you just read the amendment?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I will. It reads —

To delete all the words after “house” and insert —

applauds the government for increasing funding to culture and the arts in Western Australia in the 2011–12 budget.

Two hours having elapsed, we will obviously need to continue this during the next sitting week.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to temporary orders.