

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL
FOR THE ARTS FOR 1969/1970

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

I have received from the Chairman of the Australian Council for the Arts the Council's recommendations concerning the major grants to be made by the Commonwealth Government in support of the performing arts in the current financial year.

As I announced in August, the Commonwealth Government will be providing greatly increased support for the work of the Australian Council in 1970. The Government has done this because of its conviction that the arts have a vital role to play in the life of this country. Living in a technological age imposes great strains on an individual. People now live mainly in vast cities, subject to noise and speed and a multitude of stresses and strains, not the least of which is the feeling that somewhere in all this modern technological advancement the human individual has lost something of his dignity and value.

The arts assert above all the value of the individual. The great legacy of world art is no more than the sum of individual talent, individual skills, individual imagination fired by personal vision. The urge to find expression for feelings and ideas by creating something, by seeking new words in poetry or prose, by shaping clay, by painting, or dancing, by singing or making music or sculpture - this urge is fundamental to man, and one of the great sources of enrichment of human life. Unless people have some contact with the arts, either creating them or enjoying them as spectators, their lives are greatly impoverished. In Australia, where we enjoy a very high standard of material living, it is all the more important for us to have access to the things in life which provide beauty and stimulus and a rich personal experience.

In putting forward its proposals for the major grants for 1969/1970, the Australian Council has adhered to the same principles which guided its policies in the past year. Because it sees the Federal Government as having a responsibility to establish and maintain the highest possible standards of artistic endeavour, and to provide a possibility for talented young Australians to pursue a professional career in their own country if they wish to do so, it has recommended that the Government continue to support and develop national level companies in opera, ballet and drama. It is also concerned to see that standards of national training in the arts are as high as possible and it is proposing to expand its interest and responsibility in this area. It has also developed programmes to give increased access to the arts for country people, to encourage in young people a love and understanding of the arts, and to promote international exchanges between Australia and countries with different cultural traditions.

One of the hopes of my Government in making funds available for the arts is that this will stimulate contributions from many other sources. I am particularly gratified to see that there have already been substantial increases in the present year, particularly from certain of the State Governments who have added considerable sums to the generous provisions which they are already making, often in the form of splendid buildings and homes for the arts. Because of the generosity of some of the State Governments it has been possible to establish a new national theatre orchestra and one new State drama company, and there are instances of co-operative support in many ventures throughout the various States. As the years go by we will hope to expand this valuable co-operation with State and local governments throughout the Commonwealth.

1969 was the first year of activity for the Australian Council, and the Government is proud of the progress already made. The Government, through the Council, was able to stimulate and support artistic activity of a very wide variety. As well as the major company activities which provided ballet, opera, puppets and drama in all States of Australia, the Special Projects Fund set up by the Council provided assistance to dozens of smaller companies throughout the country, and supported several projects of particular interest - a retreat for playwrights at the University of New England, a competition for young music ensembles, a script writing contest for Australian writers, a visit to Australia by one of America's leading modern dance teachers, an experimental film and electronic production which will tour Australia in the coming year. New plays, operas and ballets were commissioned. More young people than ever before were allowed into theatres at concession rates. Australia was well represented abroad by two chamber groups and one choir, all of which received international acclaim for the standard of their work.

Next year, with the increased funds available, promises to be very much more exciting. One of the world's most famous ballet dancers - Rudolf Nureyev, will be coming to Australia to dance with our national ballet company. Sir Tyrone Guthrie, the world-famous producer, will be spending some months here working with the Melbourne Theatre Company, the Old Tote Company and possibly in Western Australia as well. Dance groups from Asia, opera and drama companies from Britain and other international groups will spend some time in Australia in the course of the year. We ourselves will be sending abroad an excellent new chamber orchestra recently formed in this country.

The Australian Council has commissioned a number of reports, and has sought advice from its committees on new areas of work which it is hoping to undertake - programmes of support for training professional theatre personnel, expanded assistance to music, an important new programme of assistance and stimulus for Aboriginal arts.

The Special Projects Fund, which was such a success in 1969, will be considerably expanded for the coming year. It will provide a wide variety of professional services to small companies throughout Australia. It will bring in some of the best international teachers and producers to work with Australian artists. It will support a play-reading and advisory service for Australian playwrights and a workshop to allow young writers to see their work performed. It will provide assistance for the production of several new Australian plays and one new Australian musical. It will help develop, in conjunction with the trade unions, a programme of union interest and activity in the arts similar to those which flourish in some other countries. It will support experimental work and innovation in dance, drama, opera and music, and seek out new audiences for the arts in various ways. It will help in certain special areas such as New Guinea, and will generally seek to provide support wherever the possibility exists of stimulating interest or raising standards in the arts throughout Australia.

In one area in particular a significant new step has been taken. That is in the Government's commitment to provide support for Australian film and television makers. The Government has accepted the report of the film committee of the Australian Council which recommended that a national film and television training school should be established, that a fund should be set up to provide assistance for experiment in film and television making, and that the Government should establish a National Film and Television Development Corporation to provide stimulus to the film industry in this country. All of these proposals have been agreed to. The Interim Council of the Film and Television Training School has been announced and will shortly be beginning its work to determine a location for this important new national institution. Arrangements are at present being made for the administration of the experimental fund, and an announcement is expected early in the New Year. The Government will also be announcing its intentions before very long with regard to the National Film and Television Development Corporation.

The Government is particularly pleased to be able to provide support for Australian film makers. It is aware of the representations which have been made over many decades for such assistance, and in the 1970's, where film and television will play such a major role in the mass communications of an electronic age, it is proper that Australian talents and skills should be developed so that the voice of this country may be heard and its image known abroad.

From time to time during the year other grants recommended by the Australian Council will be announced. Meanwhile I have pleasure in announcing the first series of major grants recommended by the Council.

CANBERRA - 3 December 1969

Note: This statement is being released in Sydney and Canberra. In Sydney, it will be issued at a press conference to be given by the Council's Chairman, Dr. Coombs, at 4 p. m.

GRANTS RECOMMENDED BY THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL
FOR THE ARTS FOR THE YEAR 1969/1970

	<u>\$</u>
1. <u>TRAINING INSTITUTIONS</u>	
a) National Institute of Dramatic Art	52,000
b) Australian Ballet School	40,000
c) Professional Training Programmes for Theatre Personnel	8,000
2. <u>NATIONAL TOURING COMPANIES</u>	
a) The Australian Ballet	290,000
b) The Australian Opera	290,000
c) Elizabethan Trust Orchestra	380,000
d) Marionette Theatre	40,000
3. <u>STATE DRAMA ACTIVITIES</u>	
a) Old Tote Theatre Company, N. S. W.	100,000
b) Melbourne Theatre Company	110,000
c) South Australian Theatre Company	31,000
d) Queensland Theatre Company	27,000
e) Canberra Theatre Trust	15,000
f) National Theatre at the Playhouse, Perth	30,000
g) N. A. T. F. A. S. , Tasmania	27,000
4. <u>REGIONAL THEATRE ORGANISATIONS ASSISTED FROM THE SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND</u>	
a) <u>New South Wales - Professional Drama, Sydney</u>	
Ensemble Theatre)	
Independent Theatre) (in total)	20,000
Community Theatre)	
b) <u>Victoria</u>	
St. Martin's Theatre	8,500
Victorian Opera Company	4,000
Ballet Victoria	5,000
c) <u>South Australia</u>	
Australian Dance Theatre	5,000
d) <u>Queensland</u>	
Queensland Ballet Company) (in total)	17,000
Queensland Opera Company)	
e) <u>Western Australia</u>	
Western Australian Opera Company	10,000
West Australian Ballet Company	8,000
Hole-in-the-Wall Theatre	2,500
f) <u>Australian Capital Territory</u>	
Canberra Repertory Society	3,500

5. SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND

A Fund to support a wide variety of activities in the performing arts such as the provision of professional services, sponsoring of international visits, underwriting special productions and productions of new Australian plays, operas and ballets, encouraging the interest of young people in the arts, supporting creative workers in the performing arts, assisting trade union arts programmes, programmes of experimental work, activities designed to develop new or special audiences and awards to encourage higher standards of criticism. Details still to be announced.

216,500

6. ABORIGINAL ARTS PROGRAMME

(Details still to be announced)

60,000

7. MUSIC ACTIVITIES

(Details still to be announced)

50,000

8. FEDERAL CO-ORDINATING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ORGANISATIONS

a) Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust for its administration, production division and entrepreneurial activities (subject to agreement on grants to associated companies)

270,000

b) Arts Council of Australia - Federal Division for its administration and country touring programmes (plus a reserve of \$35,000 for additional activities still to be developed)

40,000

c) Musica Viva Society

8,000

9. STUDIES AND REPORTS

(Details still to be announced)

20,000

10. INTERNATIONAL TOURS

a) Adelaide Festival of the Arts - English Opera Group

18,000

b) Musica Viva Society - South East Asia Tour by Robert Pikler Chamber Orchestra

10,000

Further details still to be announced.

11. FESTIVALS

a) Adelaide Festival of Arts

15,000

b) Festival of Perth

15,000

c) Moomba Festival

8,600

Further details still to be announced.

12. FILM ACTIVITIES

The establishment of the Interim Council of the National Film and Television School, the Experimental Fund and Exhibiting Fund. Details still to be announced.

300,000