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Mr Paul Fletcher MP  
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts  
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Lindfield NSW 2070

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Dear Minister,

We believe that 25 million Australians are better off when the 8.8 million Australians who live outside of the metropolitan cities are creative, productive and thriving individuals, contributing their unique perspectives to the national identity and making Australia a more culturally diverse nation.

The time is right for the Regional Arts Fund (RAF) to be increased. Increasing funding to the RAF will enable more support, better outcomes and stronger communities across Australia. The RAF is an extensive national program and is one of the most successful funding programs in Australia supporting arts and culture.

This is evident when looking at the significant and meaningful impact that the fund has had nationally. Between 2012 and 2016, the Regional Arts Fund supported 1,458 projects; 3,979,899 participants; 843 professional development opportunities; 1,943 artists and arts workers and 3,015 partnerships.

The RAF is currently \$13,853,000 over four years and we are calling for an increase of at least \$2M per year. In 2008, the Regional Arts Fund was valued at \$22 million across four years and we are calling for a return to this amount.

While funding has decreased in recent years, the demand has increased with the number of unsuccessful funding applications for high quality cultural projects approaching 70% in various jurisdictions around Australia. We need your support to turn this around so that individuals and communities across regional, remote and rural Australia will grow and thrive through flourishing arts programs such as the Regional Arts Fund.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Regional Arts Australia