

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Budget Estimates Hearings May 2016**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Australia Council**

**Question No: 4**

**Australia Council**

**Hansard Ref: Page 78, 05/06/2016**

**Topic: Australia Council - Program Funding**

**Senator Bilyk, Catryna asked:**

**Senator BILYK:** Before the 2015-16 budget how many cultural places was the Australia Council hoping to support?

**Mr Grybowski:** We piloted that very successful program twice—once in partnership in North Queensland in Rockhampton and once in South Australia in Goolwa. They were different programs but they were a pilot of the concept which partnered with state and territory and indeed local governments for a long-term program to work with professional artists and the artists in that particular community.

**Senator BILYK:** What percentage of funding will be devoted to literature in the coming financial year and how does this relate to previous years?

**Mr Grybowski:** We have not determined the specific allocation per art form. We respond obviously to the applications that we receive. So I will take that question on notice.

**Answer:**

The Australia Council supports the excellence, diversity and vitality of Australian literature. The primary focus of the Council's support for literature is on the creation, publication and promotion of Australian writing and a vibrant literary culture nationally. In January 2015, the Australia Council opened a new grants model. The grant programs have been designed as a comprehensive suite with the overall needs of the arts sector in mind.

One of the goals of Council's reforms was to make the grants model more streamlined and efficient. This has been done by moving from 140 categories to five, with streamlined criteria and eligibility requirements. Artists can now seek support for all stages of a project, allowing them to focus on artistic vision rather than fitting their arts practice into narrow categories. Council's new grants model is flexible and scalable, with capacity to be responsive to new art forms and changes in the arts sector.

Funding is delivered through grants to writers at all stages of their career, as well as to organisations supporting writer development, the publishing sector, literary magazines and journals and to programs promoting Australian writers, including writers' festivals.

The overall grants funding budget is allocated to each grants round over the course of a financial year. The funds are then divided between the arts practice areas taking into consideration demand at each round, historical funding trends and the relative success rates across the arts practice areas.

In the most recent round of grants funding for artists and arts projects announced in May 2016, grants totalling more than \$1 million were awarded to 38 poets, authors of young adult and children's stories, and fiction and non-fiction writers.