

s2m Funding Recommendations

Key points

- The Queensland Government recognises the vital importance of the small to medium sector as the engine room for innovation and creativity and the key role it plays in developing new work, taking risks, fostering community engagement and participation, providing regional access and supporting the professional development and employment of artists and arts workers.
- The former funding arrangements did not allow funding of new companies and did not have the flexibility to address emerging opportunities or priorities.
- The new funding program, s2m, will improve the balance of arts outcomes by allowing new companies to be funded, to form partnerships, address gaps and duplications and ensure funding is directed to priority areas. This encourages renewal and rejuvenation in the sector creating a stronger more sustainable future for the arts in Queensland.

History of government investment

- The Queensland Government has been a significant investor in the small to medium arts sector for over 20 years.
- Arts Queensland's annual investment in 2007 was \$9.6m (the highest of any state or territory in the country).
- Since 2000 support to this sector has been delivered through the Cultural Infrastructure Program (CIP).
- The main drivers for the introduction of the s2m funding model were:
 - The 2005 Government Review of Arts Queensland (AQ), which identified that changes were required to create greater capacity to respond to changes in the sectors and emerging opportunities.

Few new organisations had been admitted to the CIP program since its inception and the portfolio of 51 triennially funded organisations was proving to be unsustainable with annual escalation.

- The Queensland Arts Industry Sector Development Plan 2007-09 (Sector Plan), developed in consultation with the sector in 2006. The Sector Plan takes a longer term view and seeks to ensure that future investment in the small to medium arts sector:
 - achieves government priorities and directions
 - increases flexibility and responsiveness
 - maximises impacts, outcomes and returns
 - allows for entry and exit of organisations and
 - supports innovation and the development of new markets and audiences.
- The Arts Minister approved the revised framework for investment in the small to medium sector, which consists of two funding initiatives:
 - the s2m program for organisations: \$8.462m to be allocated in 2008
 - a flexible pool for industry development initiatives and emerging opportunities: \$1.1m to be allocated in 2008

The s2m program for organisations

- The s2m funding model has three funding categories: triennial, annual and annual rolling.
- The program was launched in May and applications closed in August.
- All applicants to the new program had to respond to these selection criteria:
 - demonstrated audience demand and public engagement strategies
 - high quality artistic programming

- sound management and governance
- ability to work collaboratively to engage audiences and young people
- and an ability to deliver against Sector Plan priorities.
- Following an assessment of the applications, the funding outcomes announced on 9 November were:
 - Funding approved to 43 organisations
 - 21 organisations awarded triennial funding, 14 annual and 8 annual rolling
 - 7 new organisations offered annual funding

Assessment process for s2m

- The s2m funding guidelines gave detailed information on the criteria and assessment process.
- The assessment was undertaken in strict accordance with these guidelines:
 1. All eligible applications were assessed by Arts Queensland and industry experts in terms of how well they addressed the selection criteria.
 2. Assessment decisions were based on a qualitative and quantitative analysis of applications including support material and where relevant and available:
 - Attendance at performances and/or other events
 - Reviews, videos and recordings, referee reports and other material
 - Any previous Arts Queensland funding acquittal reports
 - Communication with the Australia Council and other relevant funding bodies.
 3. Recommendations were moderated to:
 - achieve a balance within and across artforms, geographic locations, target audiences/constituents and Sector Plan priorities and
 - remain within budget allocations.
 - Final recommendations were submitted through the Deputy Director-General, Arts Queensland, to the Arts Minister who approved the funding decisions.

Industry development initiatives

- As well as the s2m grants program, the Government has set aside a flexible pool of funding allocated to the small to medium sector for industry development initiatives.
- Industry development initiatives enable Arts Queensland to respond to opportunities and emerging priorities outside the guidelines, timelines or eligibility of other AQ funding/ programs.
- Successful initiatives will deliver outcomes in three key areas:
 - Creative Development
 - Market Development
 - Business Development
- So far Industry development initiatives (IDIs) planned for 2008 will focus on:
 - regional engagement and service provision, in particular central/ north-western Queensland (\$230 000)
 - Indigenous arts including theatre development (\$100 000)
 - multicultural arts initiatives in dance and music (\$120 000)
 - performing arts support (\$200 000 shared between Brisbane and Townsville).
- These initiatives will be developed in consultation with the sector and other stakeholders including local government and implemented from early 2008.

How can companies or organisations access the IDIs?

- A range of procurement and implementation strategies will be used to ensure transparency and the expected outcomes are achieved. These are:
 - Partnerships brokered or negotiated by Arts Queensland
 - Contracts or agreements between AQ and an external partner
 - Invitation to offer (open/select tender or expressions of interest)

Communications

- The Arts Minister announced the introduction of the s2m program in May this year, advising that its main aims were to respond to new government directions, revitalise the small to medium sector and provide greater funding flexibility including access for new entrants.
- Prior to the closing date, program information was forwarded to all applicants and was made available on Arts Queensland's website and through peak industry bodies.
- General information sessions as well as face-to-face meetings were also conducted with organisations around the state to answer questions about the new program.
- On approval of the funding recommendations, all organisations were formally notified of the outcomes.
- Meetings between Arts Queensland officers and all s2m applicants to discuss funding outcomes are currently in progress. These meetings will discuss funding decisions and future support possibilities.
- The s2m guidelines, funding recommendations for 2008 and media releases on s2m and the IDIs are available on the Arts Queensland web site.