

(NT Government *Daily Hansard* excerpt, 20 Oct 2016)

Arts Funding

**Mr Gerry WOOD MLA, Independent
to Lauren MOSS MLA, Minister for Tourism & Culture**

Is the Minister aware that the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, formerly 24hr Art, in Parap was denied Australia Council funding under federal Arts Minister George Brandis for the first time in 27 years? Is the Minister aware that this loss of funding threatens the very life of one of the Northern Territory's most iconic and contributing arts organisations, that has consistently supported and exhibited up-and-coming Northern Territory artists?

Is the Minister prepared to support and save this iconic NT not-for-profit arts organisation in its time of need and assure the House and the public that the NCCA will not have to close its doors and will continue to be able to be a major supporter of Northern Territory artists?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question. It is really important that we do have a question about the arts. I think we can all appreciate how important that is.

I am aware of the funding situation of the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art and decision of the federal government. I am aware of the very good work it does, in Parap, in the Chief Minister's electorate. It is a fantastic art gallery and does very important work.

It plays a critical role for contemporary visual arts in the Northern Territory. Along with a number of arts organisations, it has, unfortunately, suffered at the hands of the federal government. Also, many of our arts organisations, this one included, were defunded by the CLP, so some of our arts organisations have experienced a loss of funding at both levels. That is something we as a government have to grapple. It is something I have definitely turned by mind to.

I understand that there is great concern and uncertainty amongst the NCCA and local artists about the future of that centre. This is a matter that is being considered by me alongside a range of other applications that are before me.

I want to be clear that as a government we value the arts. We have made some big commitments around art and culture in the Northern Territory. We recognise the role that the arts play in our economic position and in making sure we are investing in those creative jobs in the Territory.

We are investing \$100m in an Indigenous arts trail, leveraging private investment, increasing visitation to the NT as an arts and culture destination and making sure we are providing opportunities for jobs in the Territory in our creative industries.

As part of that commitment we will look at developing the iconic national Indigenous art gallery and cultural centres, upgrades to museums and galleries in the Centre and make sure we are really investing in the arts as a contributor to the economy and job creation in the Territory.

The investment in the Indigenous arts trail includes the \$50m for the national Indigenous arts centre in Alice Springs, the \$20m for the Indigenous cultural centre, also in Alice Springs, and will bring significant employment opportunities. I appreciate that investing in arts and culture is good for the economy, but also ensures that we are leaving that important legacy for our children and that we are continuing to share our stories. It is a matter that I am currently considering.