



MEDIA RELEASE

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Budget continues rebuilding by Albanese government

Last night's federal Budget has continued the rebuilding of Australia's media and arts sectors while also providing further cost of living relief for creative workers who are frequently on low incomes and in insecure employment.

The Budget provided extra investment in the arts and public interest journalism and also maintains funding for the ABC and SBS.

Key initiatives for the cultural sector announced last night were \$8.6 million to continue 'Revive Live' and \$10 million to support independent multicultural media outlets.

This spending comes on top of the announcement in December last year of \$135 million through the News Media Assistance Program, including \$33 million for Australian Associated Press.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance supports the proposed ban on non-compete clauses in employment contracts. This will allow workers across the media and creative industries to change jobs more easily.

Cost of living relief, including lowering the bottom marginal tax rate, is most welcome. This will have a material impact on the living standards of many workers in the arts in particular, where a 2024 MEAA survey found that the average practicing professional artist across all disciplines earn a gross annual income of just \$23,200 – half the minimum wage – from their creative work.

The 20% reduction of HELP/HECS debt to come into effect from June 1 this year will provide significant relief for arts workers struggling under the burden of high debts from years of tertiary education required to establish their chosen career.

"Overall, this is a steady as it goes Budget for the media and arts industries, building on the major reinvestment in these sectors since 2022, including through the national cultural policy, Revive," said MEAA Chief Executive Erin Madeley.

"Over the past three years we have seen the restoration of funding to the arts, the ABC and SBS; an increase in funding to Screen Australia and a rise in the Location Offsets incentive; recognition of the \$250 minimum payment for musicians in government grant and funding guidelines; and significant improvements to workers' rights through changes to industrial relations laws including multi-employer bargaining, right to disconnect and closing the loopholes, along with the largest increases in wages for years.

"But the work is far from finished.

"With the imminent announcement of the federal election, MEAA members will be calling on political parties to meaningfully building on the five pillars of Revive.

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“The next government must commit to taking on the big monopolies in the recorded and live performance sectors, mandating local content quotas for streaming services, and investing in public interest journalism.

“Political parties must also commit to regulating Artificial Intelligence to ensure control, compensation and consent for creative and media workers.”

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