

March 2019

An Open Letter to

Mark McGowan

The Premier of Western Australia

And

The Hon. David Templeman

Minister for Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Dear Premier and Minister,

We, the following Western Australian artists (Perth and regional), who have exhibited in *Sculpture by the Sea* at Cottesloe, are dismayed the Department of Cultural Industries does not provide substantial funding for the annual *Sculpture by the Sea* Cottesloe exhibition.

We want to thank you, Minister Templeman, for the invitation to *Sculpture by the Sea* to apply for Organisation Funding for next year, as this is the only existing source of reasonable funding available from the Department, but some serious questions need to be asked.

How is it possible the Department has taken 15 years to invite *Sculpture by the Sea* for major organisation funding?

Given the importance of this event to the cultural life of Western Australians, how is it possible the Department has not been enthusiastic in its support of *Sculpture by the Sea*, the artists who exhibit and the extraordinary public response for 15 years?

We want to know why the Department has only ever given occasional and very small grants to the largest and best attended art exhibition in Western Australia – and the last grant application was rejected!”

It is imperative that Western Australia does not lose this popular and important art exhibition. The overwhelming acceptance and sustained attendance each year by West Australians visiting the showcase validates its importance to both the visual arts and broader cultural community in WA.

Reasonable funding is desperately needed and would be very greatly appreciated. It is unfortunate WA is not able to currently provide substantial commercial sponsorship as has been the case in the past but we and everyone we speak to believes the first organisation that should be funding and embracing *Sculpture by the Sea* is the Department of Cultural Industries.

If this wasn't so serious, we'd say in the spirit of *The Life of Brian* “What has *Sculpture by the Sea* ever done for us?”

This is what *Sculpture by the Sea* has done for WA:

1. Over 200,000 people visit each exhibition for free every year. This has increased arts awareness among the broader community and adds immeasurably to our sense of community;
2. We have a world class hugely popular exhibition in Perth while other cities around the world pay millions of dollars for Blockbuster exhibitions in galleries – yet ours is on the beach, how fantastic is that!

3. WA artists have the opportunity to develop, promote and showcase work in a major exhibition along side some of the best artists in the world without the cost to freight and travel interstate or overseas;
4. Sculpture by the Sea has launched and promoted the careers of many WA sculptors to local, national and international audiences and markets;
5. Sculpture by the Sea has created opportunities to meet artists of worldwide renown and to hear them speak about their work. The opportunities created to meet other local, national and international artists is of immeasurable benefit to all WA artists;
6. Sculpture by the Sea has provided awards and opportunities for WA artists to develop their careers. The WA Sculptor's Scholarship award alone, has provided \$140,000 toward enabling many artists to develop their work;
7. Over 28,000 school students from across the Perth metropolitan area and far beyond have come through the heavily subsidised education program held each year, giving them the opportunity to work directly with artists and understand the importance of art – and they love it, you should come and see for yourselves;
8. Enabling hundreds of people to experience art through the Access and Inclusion Program that provide tactile tours, beach access days and guided tours for those with disability;
9. 8% of the exhibition visitors come from Regional WA;
10. 7% of visitors come from overseas and interstate;
11. The precedent set by a national organisation committing to an event as prestigious as Sculpture by the Sea in Perth is an example to all organisations from every sector who may otherwise never think to look at Perth as a destination;
12. If that's not enough millions of dollars are injected into the WA economy from tourists coming to the State to see the exhibition; and
13. Many of these outdoor works are produced locally in WA using local material suppliers, artswomen, artwork fabrication houses, contractors and logistic companies. The exhibition artworks alone would extrapolate into hundreds of thousands of dollars of work for the local economy. The exhibition then generates further commissioned works with the same economic benefit.

That's what Sculpture by the Sea has done for us!

All these benefits to WA would not be in jeopardy if the Department had recognised what the people of Perth recognised over 12 years go.

Urgent action is required to make up for the Department's inaction for so many years.

We ask you to please ensure Sculpture by the Sea remains in Western Australia.

Yours sincerely

The following Western Australian Artists (Perth and Regional) of Sculpture by the Sea, Cottesloe

Denise Pepper	Tom De Munk-Kerkmeer	R.M. Ron Gomboc, Cit. WA
Mikaela Castledine	Jennifer Cochrane	Jarrold Taylor
Johannes Pannekoek	Tony Davis	Kevin Draper
Britt Mikkelsen	David Hay	Rima Zabaneh
Miik Green	Ayad Alqaraghooli	Berenice Rarig
Anne Neil	Sally Stoneman	Andrea Vinokovic
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Olga Cironis Aliesha Mafrici April Pine Jina Lee Sharon Egan Tania Spencer Janine McAullay Bott Stuart Green Ben Juniper Desmond Mah Trish Lee Max Ball Jon Denaro	Elaine Clocherty Tania Ferrier Abraham Dunovitis Steve Tepper Norton Flavel Penelope Forlano Mark Grey-Smith Stuart McMillan Steven Buckles Alessandra Rossi Ryan Shaw Kerrie Argent	Noah Birch Lou Lambert Peter Zappa Tim Macfarlane Reid Kathy Allam Geoff Overheu Rebecca Westlund Addam (marwah) Eid Juliet Lee Perdita Phillips Olivia Samec Chris Greenwood
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