

**Submission  
No 78**

**INQUIRY INTO INTEGRITY, EFFICACY AND VALUE FOR  
MONEY OF NSW GOVERNMENT GRANT PROGRAMS**

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I write as a concerned member of the South Coast Writers Centre (SCWC), specifically at this time because of withdrawal of government funding. The ongoing viability of the South Coast Writers Centre's many well-supported programs is under threat. This leaves only three similar organisations with funding in NSW, all three located in the Sydney metropolitan area i.e. no regional-servicing writers' organisations are receiving support.

Without multi-year funding these organisations are unable to pay (usually part time) staff salaries to ensure the popular programs, which contribute to arts employment in the regions.

The Arts sector broadly is stretched to breaking point, with the literature sector receiving only 5% of the total long-term funding awarded by Create NSW. This is a new low, at a time when literacy levels need significant support, particularly in regional areas.

Specifically, many of the regions along the NSW south coast that enjoy the writing services of the SCWC are struggling to recover from the trauma of the 2020 fires, superimposed by floods and Covid pandemic isolation. There is strong evidence that the arts are integrally important to community recovery. They have positive impacts on health and mental wellbeing, enhance social cohesion and build community strength. People turn to the arts in tough times, seeking a salve for their souls.

Hence I request that arts funding, particularly including to regional organisations that have large areas to service, be a priority consideration of this inquiry. Because this sector knows how to run on a shoestring, having done this for quite some time, there can be no doubt that programs within it can strongly demonstrate integrity, efficacy, and most certainly value for money to the NSW Government.

The arts, including literature, is an often neglected, but most important, sector. It urgently needs, and deserves, attention and support, now more than ever.

Thank you.