

CULTURE AND THE ARTS — FUNDING

**675. Mr J.N. CAREY to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to growing WA's creative industries and jobs across the local arts sector. Can the minister advise the house whether the state is being supported by the federal government in delivering this commitment; and, if not, how is WA not receiving its fair share?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:**

I thank the member for Perth for his continued interest in culture and the arts, particularly the creative industries.

The creative industries is a rapidly growing aspect of the Western Australian and Australian economies, and it will continue to grow. It needs to be supported strongly by all levels of government, but particularly, of course, the federal and state governments. The member has asked a question that is very important because since 2001 we have had, in my view, an outdated formula for funding from the federal government, particularly with regard to what are known as the major performing arts organisations under the major performing arts framework, and it is effectively unfair. The weighting in favour of other states, particularly New South Wales and Victoria, is stark. Because the member has asked, I would like to give a few comparisons. In terms of the MPA framework—the major performing arts framework—for every dollar invested in our state's major opera, dance and theatre companies, the federal government invests only 28 cents, compared with \$3.89 for New South Wales and \$1.79 for Victoria. To make this even clearer, New South Wales needs to spend only \$11.7 million of its own money for 10 major performing arts companies, while Western Australia contributes \$9 million for its four major performing arts companies. What does this mean? It simply means that it is now an outdated methodology.

When I went to the cultural ministers' meeting in Canberra at the end of last week, I highlighted the discrepancies and called on the federal government to be much fairer in terms of distribution and, indeed, recognise that this unfair treatment of Western Australia in particular must be remedied. I have asked—or demanded, basically—that we need an increase of \$3.6 million from the federal government just to bring us up to a comparative level with the other states.

It is so important that members in this place understand the contribution that cultural and arts activities and the cultural industry make to the Western Australian economy. The McGowan government is very proudly investing heavily in those creative industries, including of course contemporary music and other areas, and we will continue to do so. But it is time that the federal government and the federal arts minister recognised the discrepancies in a formula that is now outdated and needs to be adjusted. Western Australia is not asking to take money from other states; it is simply asking for us to be treated fairly and to receive appropriate funding to allow our major performing arts organisations to continue to do the tremendous job they do in our community.