

Thursday, 14 March 2019

## **NSW LABOR TO REVIEW ALL HARWIN ARTS FUNDING GRANTS DECISIONS – IN LIGHT OF SECOND REPORT OF INTERFERENCE**

All arts funding grants determined and distributed by Arts Minister Don Harwin in the last two years will be subject to a comprehensive independent review, if a Daley Labor Government is elected next weekend.

The review will look at the decision-making process and how the funding allocations were determined. This is in light of two separate known incidences of political interference by Mr Harwin – over-ruling the independent assessment panels.

Shadow Arts Minister Walt Secord made the commitment and referred to the incidences of the:

- The Regional Cultural Fund – and concerns expressed this morning (7.45am – ABC Radio Sydney) that Mr Harwin over-ruled the independent selection panel and re-directed funding to 13 projects in Berejiklian Government-held electorates, which did not meet basic requirements; and
- The Arts and Cultural Development Program – where Mr Harwin admitted in mid-2018 that he redirected \$1 million from small arts groups to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. This resulted in 11 organisations missing out on funding and some arts groups were forced to cancel programs because of the decision.

(Mr Harwin was appointed as Minister for the Arts in late- January 2017.)

“The politicisation of arts funding by the Berejiklian Government must stop. The funding should go to deserving groups rather than the mates of the Arts Minister.”

“The actions of the Arts Minister have been appalling. Without any regard for his impact on the arts community, he removed funding from struggling groups in a cavalier manner.

“For many of these arts groups, these funds are the difference between staying afloat or disappearing forever.

“It is very disappointing to see a Minister of the Crown using the arts portfolio to distribute funds to parliamentary colleagues and his personal favourite arts groups.”

“The review will be about restoring confidence in the arts grants process and limiting political interference in the distribution of arts and cultural grants.”

“NSW Labor will restore integrity and the proper processes to the distribution of arts and culture grants administered by the State Government, if elected.”