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# Fair Pay for Artists

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NAVA Media Release

**Posted by**



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Today, the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is launching its Fair Pay for Artists (<https://visualarts.net.au/advocacy/campaigns/fair-pay/>) campaign calling for industrial fairness for artists and other art professionals. The campaign has three components: \$5 million for artists' fees; superannuation for artists and other art professionals; and an artists' income supplement pension scheme.

NAVA is the national peak body protecting and promoting the professional interests of the Australian visual and media arts, craft and design sector. The recommended fee levels for the art industry are published in its widely respected best practice standard: The Code of Practice for the Professional Australian Visual Arts, Craft and Design Sector (<https://visualarts.net.au/code-of-practice/>).

## 1. Artists Fees

NAVA has started a petition (<https://www.change.org/p/senator-mitch-fifield-call-to-action-artists-fees/>) asking the Federal Government to allocate \$5 million/year for under-resourced galleries to be able to pay artists fees at least at the recommended industry rate. NAVA is proposing that these funds be distributed through a newly established Artists Fees Fund administered by the Australia Council. The fees would be paid for work commissioned or borrowed by public galleries for exhibition where the work is not for sale.

**Tamara Winikoff OAM**, Executive Director of NAVA said today, "We are calling on the federal government to demonstrate that it has a vision for Australia culture by providing \$5 million to enable galleries to pay those who make the art. The NAVA campaign is bent on making change so that artists' work is appropriately valued and respected and artists and other art professionals are fairly remunerated for their time and skills."

One of Australia's most highly regarded Indigenous artists, Tasmanian based **Julie Gough** said, "Artist's should be recognised as professionals in their field, and paid at an established rate for their work. It is only by valuing the arts in this concrete, funded way, hence aligned to other careers and fields, that artists can commit to contribute continually and at a high level to this critical backbone of societal wellbeing."

Executive Director of Sydney based Artspace, **Alexie Glass-Kantor** said, "Artspace is a strong advocate for artists' rights and firmly supports this campaign. Through being the Chair of Contemporary Art Organisations Australia (CAO) we encourage our member organisations to meet industry standards in paying fees to artists and valuing their labour. Support for programming and operations is critically important, and we believe that the current Government's funding cuts are having a detrimental impact on the arts sector. We ask the Government to act urgently and immediately cease the reduction of arts funding."

Over the last two years, artists have been increasingly disadvantaged because of Government cut backs with an estimated 70% loss of grant opportunities (<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/may/19/the-70-drop-australia-council-grants-artists-funding-cuts>). The contraction of organisational support (with the loss of operational funding to 30% of visual arts organisations (<http://www.artshub.com.au/news-article/news/grants-and-funding/deborah-stone/65-arts-organisations-lose-funding-from-australia-council-251271>) previously funded by the Australia Council) has made the budgets of small to medium art spaces extremely tight. The Federal Government's 'Catalyst' program does not ameliorate either of these problems

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**Claire Sourgnès**, CEO of Brisbane based contemporary craft and design organisation, Artisan said, "We're proud to pay our exhibiting artists NAVA rates. However, with ever-decreasing funding, this base line for best practice is being undermined and put under increasing pressure. We wholeheartedly welcome a consistency of remuneration from arts organisations and institutions, irrespective of size or location. And we support a system of economic equity, where smaller organisations are assisted in meeting their obligations to artists, craftspeople and designers, ensuring proper and fair payment in recognition of their professional status, skills and experience."

This campaign also has the backing of the Australian Greens in their policy. Arts spokesperson, **Senator Sarah Hanson-Young** said "In 2016 the Greens announced that we will support artists' incomes by investing \$20 million over four years into a fund so that organisations can pay artists fees for works that are publicly displayed."

## 2. Superannuation

NAVA is also seeking a solution to the problem of erratic payment of superannuation to artists and other art professionals who provide services to the industry. Unlike most other professionals, they are not consistently being enabled to provide for their old age.

Internationally acclaimed Australian artist and NAVA board member **Sally Smart** said, "People are often surprised to learn that artists don't receive superannuation through the course of their professional work as artists. Most working Australians take it for granted that everyone working is receiving superannuation benefits. This is also a gender issue as many women do not receive or are under-funded in regards to superannuation. There needs to be a radical rethink on policy to redress this current inequity and unfairness."

**Michael Fox**, Melbourne based arts accountant & valuer said, "Artist fees should attract superannuation because every other worker in Australia is paid compulsory super on their 'ordinary time earnings'. Artist fees are no different to this principle. The payment of superannuation to artists for their participation in exhibitions is important to recognise the valuable time they contribute to our cultural enrichment. Artists typically work long hours beyond what is required to fulfil the requirements of their artist fee. The superannuation on that fee needs to be set aside for their retirement."

## 3. Artists' Income Supplement

NAVA is equally concerned that artists need to have a guaranteed living wage. The social security system is not geared to respond appropriately. NAVA is calling for the establishment of an Artists Income Supplement pension scheme to support artists when their income drops below the poverty level.

To resolve the challenges and change the culture, NAVA's campaign will build on its research done in 2016 and will involve a series of consultation meetings with politicians and federal and state arts funding bodies, based on the findings from a series of roundtables with all types of galleries, artists and other art professionals from across Australia.

### **Ways you can support this campaign**

- o Sign the petition (<https://www.change.org/p/call-to-action-support-artist-fees-and-fair-pay-for-artists>)
- o Share the petition on social media #fairpayforartists
- o Write to the Arts Minister: [minister@communications.gov.au](mailto:minister@communications.gov.au) and arts representatives in the other political parties and/or to your local MP
- o Write to the Australia Council and your state/territory funding body asking that they make it mandatory for their grants recipients to pay artists fees at least at industry rates
- o Join up as a NAVA Member (<https://visualarts.net.au/shop/products/>)
- o Donate to NAVA's campaign (<https://visualarts.net.au/shop/products/>)

### **To find out more about the campaign visit:**

<https://visualarts.net.au/fairpay/> (<https://visualarts.net.au/fairpay/>)

### **For media comment and enquires please contact**

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