Future/Forward Day 2 2018

Session 1: Welcome to Parliament with Justine Van Mourik

Penelope: Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we gather today, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to elders past, present, and emerging. Also acknowledge all the wonderful Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people here with us today.

Now I'm going to introduce Justine van Mourik, the Director of Exhibitions and Collections of Parliament House to talk to us about the collection, and your work here.

Justine: Thanks Penelope. I'm going to do that thing at the beginning of the school tour. Can I have a show of hands if you've been in this building before. That's pretty great, not bad.

Audience 1: Probably, we went to school.

Justine: Did you get dragged through at school? I'm too old for that. One of the wonderful things about this building, and I'm going to explain. For some of you this is probably a bit remedial, but for others, it hopefully will just give you a bit of insight and into this building. And I say 'this building' because I separate this building from the government. The Parliament is not the same as the government. Parliament house was designed to have a license 200 years. Parliamentarians come and grow; this building will remain.

One of the beautiful things about this building is when Mitchell / Giurgola & Thorp designed this building, the question of meaning came up. How do you view a structure with meaning? And another gentleman wrote a quite similar paper to the speaker which was Billy Sanborn saying - the only way that I can give you a building with meaning and what it means to be Australian and all its facets is through the use of art and basically asks to give him a fairly large sum of money to create what would become the parliament house art and craft program. That art/craft program was more than 70 commissions given to Australian artists and crafts people to create everything from the mosaic in the food court through to the sculptures in the gardens, fabric, the lights, installations, you name it and artists were given those commissions. This building is a kind of testament to their care, their skill. Some extraordinary craftsmanship and the forward-thinking vision of Romaldo Giurgola. At the same time, it mattered a lot to Giurgola what our elective representatives put on their office walls, because frankly, if you let them decorate their own office, it's not good.

So the second part of that art/craft program was what we call the rotational rotating collection, and the construction authority had its own curator, Katrina Rumley, and Katrina was given a chequebook and allowed to basically buy works of art to fill the building up. I think she bought something like 2,800 works in about a 7-year period.

Penelope: Say that on the microphone, wow!

Justine: Yeah, she was a registered as a nightmare cause she used to just go to shows and walk in and go "I'll have the whole lot, and you know my trucks out the back." So

she bought 2,800 works of art and so the minute that the Parliamentarians moved into this building, my predecessors were around there going pick something for your office. So it's become over the past 30 years, it's our 30th anniversary this year, it's become an accepted part of the experience of being an elected representative of this building is the opportunity to select from the best Australian contemporary art and craft. There are people in this room who are in our collection whether they realise it or not. I have to tell you, I think I was talking with Vanessa when she came up, not one of them has ever said to me "Nick off, I don't want any ... I don't want any art for my office." You are in the unenviable position of all the art forms of being right up in their grill every day. You are in their offices, you are in their corridors, you are in the spaces that they inhabit, so please never forget that. It is a contemporary collection, you know I'm not doing straight from home to profits, I'm doing [inaudible 00:04:35] bell [crosstalk 00:04:38].

Penelope: Are there any like that here? Right about here.

Justine: I know. So you know, you are up in their grill, you are up in their offices, you are there as a daily reminder that a life exists outside this building, a lot of artists will try and sell me work of Parliamentarians. You know, [inaudible 00:04:58], Julia Gillard. Okay, that's fantastic, but they don't need to see any more of themselves than they already do. So what I'm looking to buy are works that reflect what's going on outside. What is going on outside this building? What does it mean to be Australian? What does it mean to live in a pluralist society? What does it mean to be truly multicultural? What are the experiences of our first Australians? So these are the works we are looking to buy. We're looking to buy works that have meaning.

So it is easy to walk down the corridors and instead of seeing wallpaper, if you work in this building, some people kind of ... they'll blanket after a while so we keep moving it, we keep rotating it. We're not about a bit of gorilla hanging. The other day we brought out quite a strong picture from the 80's by Gil Jamieson of basically a dying cow and giraffe and put it in a corridor because it's topical, it's now. So we will move the art around, we will buy work that we think is stimulating. It is not decoration, it is inspiration, and that's how we treat it. You will only get to see a very small fraction right here I'm afraid, but neither you are there, artists are there, they are continually there. We are still buying. We've bought between about 50 and 100 works a year, and mostly at a lower price point, at the lower end of the spectrum, I think your average acquisition price is about $8,000. We only buy Australian artists, we only buy at the first point of sale, so we don't buy from [inaudible 00:06:29] or Christies, or re-sellers. We buy directly from artists and a lot of cases where they're not represented, that's something that we love to ring. We buy directly from art vendors, from Indigenous art centres, so you know, if you want to send me something, do it!

Penelope: Do it!

Justine: It's art@aph.gov.au

Penelope: Writing it down, I can see.

Justine: Yeah, seriously writing it down now for their transcripts. But no, send me something. It's impossible for me to be everywhere all the time. I am very frugal with the taxpayer dollar. You probably won't see me at everything that opens and shuts. We do kind of rely on some spotters in states and territories to find things that they think might suit us. We're interested in art that reflects portfolio of business. It's really interesting when you do

sort of diminutive agriculture, that one's an easy one, count some sheep. But you know the Minister for Health, what have we got there? What are the stories that we can be telling how we're helping that Minister, you know, human services, social services, those sorts of things. So they're the kinds of stories that we're looking to tell. Agriculture and defence, that is you, but human stories are harder. People do love things that are made and folks have them in their office. We have Parliamentarians crying in selection sections because our work has affected them quite deeply.

So never forget that you are an intrinsic part of this building. But also don't forget that they're only here for 20 weeks a year, the other 30 they're back in their electric. You know, how much in there? And for those of you in the smaller states like Tasmania, you've got 12 senators. There's literally a senator around every corner. Get to know them, honestly get to know them. Go in their office, if their office looks boring, their election office, maybe offer them something.

Penelope: Not for free obviously.

Justine: No.

Penelope: No. High price, rental.

Justine: Rent or pay for.

But you know, maybe offer them something, maybe you invite them to a show and I think a lot of the time, because I do see all of the Parliamentarians, we drive them to individually with what's available, we allow them to select from the catalog. You know, they're into it but sometimes they just don't know how to be into. Maybe they're not getting invited to things or they don't set foot in there, like we're gathering art, but once we get into the selection session and we're flipping through the folders and they're right into it. And then the art comes and like I said, no one ever tells me to nick off, they're always like "Oh my god, the art people are here." So you are the art people and I am your representative in Canberra.

Penelope: Great, thank you so much for that.

Justine: My pleasure.

Penelope: Does anyone have any questions for Justine? I mean, that was a pretty insightful ... Oh yeah, great. You know I haven't got the mic people. Oh yeah, great, thanks Sylvia.

Audience 2: I was just wondering if you collected anything other than painting? Do you collect media work and installation work?

Justine: Yeah, we do.

Audience 3: Painting is good.

Justine: Yes, I second that. Painting is good. We pretty much collect across the range. I mean, I think you have to remember about this collection, because it's a vanishing collection, it works very hard and I understand that the art galleries have the luxury of time and conservatives and basically when an elections called, it's all hands on deck and we have

to move everything. So our criteria is not so much painting, it's robust. We like robust works of art. We don't have time to kind of stop and give my conservation or construct installations, it has to be something that we essentially can pick up and move. So we do collect painting works on paper, glass, ceramics, yeah pretty much everything. The only thing we don't collect is wearable art because god knows what would happen if we put it in displays. So yeah, we don't do much in the wearable area, robust is our criteria. Because you know, art does work very hard. Most of the galleries have got between 1 and 5% on display and we've got over 50% on display. And like I said, when an election happens, we're moving 2,800 work in six weeks and we just wholesale, stripping the suedes of work and then reallocate back to Parliamentarians. Especially when there's a change in government, it's a huge amount of work to move in a short period of time. So it needs to be robust.

Penelope: Oh yes, another one. [crosstalk 00:11:23]

Audience 4: Hi, do you ever have artists in residency or a program to facilitate kind of occupying the space?

Justine: We have done commissions in the past with an artist in residence. At the end of last one [inaudible 00:11:38] in 2013, she shot at a series of the house at work, and that was fantastic. It's something that we're looking at. I mean one of the other things too is as this building was nearing completion, of course everything was well over budget, so the two things they decided to cut we're the landscaping and the art program. So the full scale of the art program was never realised and I'm actually quite glad about that, cause what it's left is spaces. Spaces that we can now fill. So we're commissioning things like a report that says how many sculpture sites are there in this precinct that are yet to be filled over the 200 year lifespan of the building? Can we do a magic commission once every five or ten years in order to start filling those spaces? So there are still opportunities, and at the moment we're just betting down our collection management and getting everything right, and then we'll probably start weighing into the murky waters of commissioning.

Penelope: And there was someone behind here, I saw her hand, or was that just my eyes?

Audience 5: I had a question.

Penelope: Oh great, okay. Wow, heaps of questions, how wonderful. Yeah, can you pass that up? Thank you.

Audience 5: Justine I'm wondering if you're able to speak to some of the non commissioned artists to get to be those, having it around Parliament house. I can even give a few examples, but you know, when things do happen, artistic interventions, what are you thinking and did you take note of them or report them in any way?

Justine: Yeah, I think one of the things is we're not government, we're Parliament so we do record particular what goes in and on in the precinct. The information that you'll get a little sneaky-peek at tonight and a free colouring poster to take home, is about this building and what this building ... how this building is represented by artists and not necessarily artists in their collection. So I've spent the last four or five years trolling, collecting how artists have represented this building. Which is interesting because it's not about politics usually, there's a genuine fascination with the flag on the top of the flag mast. So you'll see in the exhibition, there's a recurring thing about the flag, and I'm not sure what that is but it seems

to kind of be part of any representation of this building. But I think we do kind of see ourselves as you know, it's not our main job but we do see ourselves as archivists of what goes on inside and around this building.

Penelope: Great, we've got three minutes.

Justine: Let's have a quick one.

Penelope: Okay, great.

Audience 6: On visual artists, and I actually work in kitchen in Parliament here sometimes and I didn't realise you had such a large art department. How did you get a job in your [inaudible 00:14:52]

Justine: Well you have security clearance. Yeah, wasn't that confronting when our art handler said to get security clearance. Some of them were really worried about the [inaudible 00:15:05] profile and what they said on them. How do you get a job here? You have to be able to be managed, that probably helps. Look, we've expanded quite rapidly. I think when I started here in 2013, there were seven of us. And it came really apparent pretty early on that there was a lot of work still to be done in terms of cataloging, in terms of digitisation.

So basically nothing had been shot digitally, we had 35 slides that, you know, when we take these pictures around and we'd offer them to Parliamentarians and then the work would turn up and the slide would be pink and the work would be orange, so we quickly realised it was bit of remedial work to do, so we sort of scout out to accommodate that. We also, with the changes in office holders and cabinets and Prime Ministers and we've had to expand out art handle full. So there's about on and off almost 20 of us now working mostly on project work to get some of those back while the issue is addressed. But you know, you come to us in the normal way. We advertise, in fact we advertised a position very recently. We advertise in your art museums in Australia, those sorts of places. So that's where we are and we do have jobs fairly regularly.

Audience 6: Do you have any links with the actual art schools in Australia? As in like we've promoted in other ways or people that have jobs outside of just being an artist. Cause let's be honest, it's very hard to live as an artist, so what kind of recommendation do you have for people that are studying?

Justine: One of the things that we do do is we instituted a program. We take an intern from the ANU school of art, art history and curatorship, we'll take an intern and teach them reality of working in this environment. We also recently, many of you will be aware, there's a huge tapestry in the great hall of which designed tapestry. We had to take that down for the building work cause you can hear and see that tangle on the roof is not where we have raves, it would be awesome though. So when we took that tapestry down, we realised that basically for those of you at the conservation event, we had to vacuum it front and back. We realised that was a big job, so we made partnership with the University of Canberra with their conservation students and they've come in and vacuumed it and it's been fantastic. I mean, the experience that they have gained from that free labour ... Yeah it is, it's about making those partnerships with tertiary education.

For us it's also about making partnerships with our culture institutions and bringing them into this environment. Our parliamentarians are incredibly busy, they work in 15 minute

increment appointments. I don't know any Parliamentarian that comes here, sitting with, and goes, “I've got a couple hours to spare, I'll just nick down to the National Gallery.” So what we try and do is we've made partnerships war memorial portrait gallery and other institutions have brought work here so they can be seen in this building as well. It is about forging those partnerships. For us primarily, it's with the other institutions and with the tertiary educations.

Audience 7: Really fascinating, thank you, that was great, but you did say right at the beginning, you're not sure if you know whether you're in the collection. Do you have a listing of all the works? Cause I think it's really important that if people are in the collection, that they should know they are cause at the very least that's something you can put on a resume. But yeah, anyway, is there a listing, a catalog, something about?

Justine: Yeah, so we do have a collection management system, and as I said before, legacy cataloging was not great, and some of that, particularly in the 80's that rapid collecting where you're collecting 2,800 works at a time, apparently some dealers forgot to tell artists that their work had been bought. So we are methodically working back through that catalog to correct things like birthdays and titles and year of production and media. So there's a lot of legacy cataloging we need to do. But the upshot of that and the digitisation is that the whole thing will be available online. It will link to trove and you will be able to troll through it like you can any other public collection.

Audience 7: I hesitate to say when?

Justine: There's almost 7,000 objects so our photographers just done, I think 700 construction photos, so we're humming through it, but yeah, you might need to talk to my colleagues and honestly [inaudible 00:19:50].

Penelope: There's one more.

Audience 8: Hi, my names Janie, I'll make it quick. I just have a special request, if you could try a bit harder on the agriculture theme. I think it's sheep and cows that have done a lot of damage to our land in Australia, not just for dispossessing every little people, but also the damage from the groups. And some of our foods are actually super foods, some of the best in the world because this land is so ancient.

Justine: That's true. I think when I ... sorry I shouldn't cuss [inaudible 00:20:30] I think what I was saying before, is we're not buying work that's comfortable. They're not comfortable sheep and cows, if there is such a thing.

Audience 8: [inaudible 00:20:41] if you're not seeing alternative perspective.

Justine: We are giving those perspectives. So what I was about to say, there was a work quite recently by Dale Cox called [inaudible 00:20:51] and it depicts three sheep on a gold background, but on the backs of those sheep are miniature trees and giant electrical transformers. So that series of work deals very much with the clearing of land for agriculture, for power, for other industrial practices. Whether or not that Parliamentarian who has that work, and I think it at the moment is in the Ministerial wing, whether they realise the intent of it, it's there, it's quietly there during its stay. So I don't ever assume that we just hear ... As I said, it's not decoration, it's inspiration. We're not here to put pretty pictures of flowers on the wall.

Penelope: Well thank you Justine, people join me, thank you.

Esther: Thanks Justine. Oh! Thanks Justine! Where's the on button? There we go. Thanks Justine.

Another good question about the kinds of work, because one thing I was really struck by when Justine and I had the chance to have lunch and a good chat a while ago was just singing and getting to understand just how much critically challenging work is in your collection particularly, work that Justine has acquired. It's kind of like, we need this space to be somewhere where when people are walking around doing their everyday job, whether they're elected or not, whether they work here or not, that the work is challenging them and I think that is really important. And I don't know how much time we're going to have to wander and enjoy the space as well. There's a lot of really great work to see. I also want to acknowledge that we've got Kara Kirkwood in the space, is she here? She was here before. In that case, can I publicly thank Kara Kirkwood for helping us out this morning, getting some of this in.

Kara Kirkwood: Thank you [inaudible 00:23:16]!

Esther: Thank you! Give us a wave. She's waving, hi Kara. Kara is the ... tell us the official title.

Penelope: Indigenous Strategy and something or other. Engagement.

Esther: And it's just fantastic that we have someone of Kara's expertise and awesomeness in that role and yet these guys are a good team.

Good morning everyone, how are you? Justine has set the tone for this whole room by coming in. I came through with school, it felt like every year and in fact, something that I wanted to say yesterday with Nick, but forgot, and it's actually something that's good for us to advocate about is that there's a list, and someone will know this more than me, there's a list of national culture institutions that are on the Department of Education's list and it means that school kids get to come and they get subsidised to come. Top on the list is Parliament House and Justine gave me the thumbs up, but also the war memorial, but the NGA is not on that list, which means that ... I don't need to be strong, there is some kind of subsidy, it's less than the top one. But wouldn't it be fantastic if every school kid when they come and visit had to go and have a great experience at the NGA, as well as Parliament House. It just seems odd that Parliament and the war memorial are the top two.

Penelope: Agreed. But it was so grand to see so many school kids here yesterday.

Esther: It was great, yeah, yeah. So we have a chat about...

Penelope: Yesterday. So many things. Let's do a little recap, cause I know that there's some people who joined us today that weren't with us yesterday, welcome. We had a wonderful welcome yesterday by Auntie Matilda who really set the tone of what we're doing here, which is really special. Then we had an introduction by our Deputy Chair, Sally Smart. And now Ester and I talked through Nalda's strategic plan and our plans to revise the code of practice and then we aimed for nationally agreed, nationally consistent standards for a contemporary arts sector that's ambitious and fair. And we're going to publish that on our

website in the next few days, so I do encourage you all to have a look at it because we're so excited about this document. It's really great.

Esther: And please tell us what you think, because you'll see that the plan itself, like that plan, that ambition around having those nationally consistent standards but also around the advocacy of policy and action. This is staff that is going to be led by all the conversations that we have all together rolling over the next few years. The last film [inaudible 00:26:34] over the years and every work we've done last few years leading up to the plan and then in the time that I can still get away with being new, I have visited every state so far except the Northern Territory. I know there's just a handful from the Northern Territory today, so, welcome again. In each one of those cities and all sort of other regional places, we've had members gatherings, we've had round tables on one of the key issues in the state at the moment, and then we've also had some critical conversations with several states with elections coming up and we've started to talk about how we're going to collaborate that really timely visible advocacy of course people are listening more leading up to election. And all those conversations, as you see in the plan, are just going to keep continuing so that we can hear and learn and push and advocate and make change.

Penelope: Thanks. We then, after that amazing thing, we had a wonderful session hosted by Peter White and Richard Bell on self-determination, first nations first, and I love that that session was an hour and a half. I thought that we gave everybody a good opportunity to think and talk and share their thoughts about it and I got heaps out of that session, so thanks guys. And thank you everybody for their contributions in that session. We then had lunch, which I think was almost my favourite part of the day because we were sitting in the sun and having really good conversations that unfortunately, we haven't been able to have in this context of sitting in a theatre. It was very us and them kind of vibe, which is not really what we were hoping to do but limited by venues and really wanting to be heavy NGA and Parliament House, that's just the format that we're stuck with. I really appreciate everyone who came and spoke to me and I hope that you all got really great conversations with each other and have had lots of ideas and connections and ...

Esther: Yeah, I completely agree. And also, we appreciate all the chats that I got to have with everyone too. It's that kind of ... It's trying to strike that balance between the get [inaudible 00:29:03] of our venues and opening up the conversation together to do our best to do more of today.

Penelope: That's right. And just as you say that, we might do that right now because the session after lunch was on ARI's and we had a really great history of the Basement project from Patricia Piccinini and their impact of being involved in setting up and running an ARI on her own practice. The kind of impact I know we all feel any of us that have been involved in one or more ARI's and it tends to be the case that when you're involved in one ARI, you kind of get relieved to it and you're involved in so many. It's such a great thing to do for your own practice.

We were limited because it was only one hour that we really ran out of conversation time, so I'm going to invite now Channon and Llewellyn to come and come and present and lead some conversation because I know that all the ARI's got together last night and had good conversations about what they want to get out of these two days and what they want to get out of NAVA and all this great work we're going to do. So Esther and I ... Do you want to stand up there or do you want to come and sit in the chairs?

Channon: Thanks everyone.

Llewellyn: Thank you very much.

channon: The time is appreciated. I'll try to hold my momentum today so it's going to be a good one. My name is channon Goodwin, I'm from Bus projects in Melbourne but I've been there for five years previously from Brisbane and I do all my studies there as an artist and started getting involved in organisations at that point, eventual arts and [inaudible 00:31:10] and British state of the Queensland art gallery, it's there, I've been to the Gallery of Modern Arts, so I think it's a bit of a Brisbane alliance back on the stage so we hopefully ... I was a bit nervous about chewing up time so I've written stuff for this so forgive me if I read.

Given there were so many others from spaces with us for Future Forward, from right around the country, was a good opportunity to reinforce yesterday's talk, which I must say was quite personally moving, I mean those stories, I think, resonate with a lot of people who have got involved in organisations. In a way, this is in a sense we can provide a little counterpoint to some of the more personal discussions that happened yesterday. Maybe get in the mood of this more political day today.

So to contextualise further, I thought it was useful to do so. With history spanning back to the independent galleries of the late 1960's, I just run organisations in Australia … important sites for self-determination for others within the arts system. They achieve this through a variety of collective strategies, collaborative actions, which enable artists to resist established systems of commodification and often alternative narratives to dominant forms, often with important political ramifications. I think Richard Bell talked about this in terms of kicking down doors. This dogs really allowed to do so when they choose to. Living well beyond a previously presumed morality. Artist run organisations now play an essential role in sustaining Australia's ecosystem and imagining alternative futures.

Working together in networks, we're involved in one network, but there are many. We're involved in [inaudible 00:32:50] conference. We generate new knowledge in contributing to discussions around conditions of labour, under resourcing and foregrounding issues of gender, contra diversity, first nation agency, LGBTQIA+ representation in the islands. I thought that just in terms of [inaudible 00:33:06] contextual work, professor Daniel Palmer wrote over a decade ago "Artist-run is a loose term that can be applied to a physical gallery space with conceptual projects are collected, any combination of the above, simply put, artists are in charge." With artistry control, traditional definitions between artists, curator, individual and institution are broken down. Artists become administrators, curators, writers, book keepers, or theorist's design as musicians are encouraged to fuse disciplines and enter into the nebulous would of contemporary art. Such fluidity, significantly adds to the experimentation and innovation of the contemporary arts scene. So just to kind of bring it to a point in a way, on reflection we've pulled together three strategic areas that we think could assist with areas. By no means is this the end point, this is kind of from a male point of view.

Llewellyn: Sure, and we talked about a lot of things last night and we just thought we'd try to keep it brief and really punchy. I've written down some things I'll just read out.

So talking as a group yesterday, our key concern for many of the arts initiatives across Australia has been recognising the robust research that already exists around the importance of ARI's. Particularly the ongoing work of all conference, and we'd like to kind of put it to

NAVA, how can we work together with NAVA to research our sector in an effective and timely manner. And ... Oh yeah, you're going to do the 2nd one.

Channon: So how can we institute the expert care for the ARI sector to better champion the unique benefits and diverse operational models. And this is something I guess is really particular in terms of how organisations that may have alternative models of management are not judged necessarily as just second best as opposed to more traditional organisations.

Llewellyn: The last one here is the narrative that ARI's are a stepping stone for young artists is no longer accurate or relevant, it was never accurate or relevant. And artists are making a deliberate decision to work with ARI's as fluid and responsive spaces, which are advancing best practice for artists. So can we work together to better advocate for the value of the ARI sector in the [inaudible 00:35:25].

Channon: Thank you very much, thank you. Should we pass the mic back? Oh yeah, do you want to ask questions? Yeah, you can interrogate us. It's not just a one-way floor.

Llewellyn: We can return to the points. So the first one was about the pre-existing research in regards to the importance of ARI's for artists. You could go through a couple of the points.

Channon: Sure. Well I think that one of the points is none of this is new, right? So other than the things that I say, the things that I read, the language I use, it's all sort of been done before, that's why I guess when we set up a network, we didn't necessarily really foreground it around making art together but gathering knowledge. All Conference has a library online that we try as much as possible at the art school to support this to republish for the difficult to find text on this part of the sector, which often gets buried or carried on word of mouth all through talks. Like yesterday's talk, it was a good example of how knowledge has been passed on in terms of these stories, these narratives. And I guess that does sort of perpetuate a certain kind of ephemerality in terms of knowledge, in terms of trying to put cases for this sector. I guess there's a kind of literature review process that's actually really useful for this part of the sector, because there's already the things that exist through capital [inaudible 00:37:07] to research projects, to exhibitions on ARI's that curators have done research with previous reports that NAVA has done, previous events that NAVA has done. There's patchwork of knowledge that kind of comes out can really be woven together I think much more effectively, without even needing to do a [inaudible 00:37:24] of new research. That's helpful, but ...

Llewellyn: Yeah sure, and if we're going to look historically at the importantce of NRI's and try to integrate that into a kind of practice. We want to be really sure that we're getting the breadth of what's happening. I think All Conference is pretty bloody good at getting that breadth.

Channon: Well it's just in the infancy but I think it's also a collaborative. All Conference doesn't include everyone, right? So we acknowledge that that was kind of a way initially just to make things work, but also the benefits. Ideally, a broad, but the notion of collaboration across sector is really important because we don't all agree, right? So we don't all have the same kind of priorities or art form interests, and that's fine, in terms of that. It

doesn't mean that each of those facets really can be combined to kind of really create a really interesting knowledge picture.

With that in mind, perhaps there are other perspectives that we can draw on from the audience because we have so many good people here who have been to work within or have critiques or you know, these things are all are really open to critique. I can't see anyone at this point. Oh, Richard, of course.

Audience 9: Hi, I'm Dan, I've got into a few conversations in breaks with people and we did start talking about how cappuccino isn't $1.80 anymore, it's not the 90's. So as inspiring as that was, there's kind of new challenges now and someone, perhaps it was even you that mentioned that maybe we need to go towards building less space but we still need to create community in everything. So with the concept of future forward, I'm kind of interested to know what is the future of the ARI, that doesn't mean a space, and what are the amazing opportunities there and what are some of the pit falls and what are some of the great projects that have been done now that I can go visit or hear more about today?

Llewellyn: I think Derek, like we're talking about the breadth of our strong initiatives and what they can do. I think there are really interesting spaces that are being run as bricks and mortar spaces across Australia. In the past 10 years there's been really ambitious spaces. We're seeing a kind of transition towards ARI's having a more institution like setting. Having really ambitious expedition spaces. Trying to push install to be really professional, but then there's incredible off-site projects happening too. I'm not going to try and list the cool things, so I'll have to think about it on this whole bunch of stuff.

Audience 9: Whether it's in this combo or in … I want to talk to all those people [crosstalk 00:40:08] Putting my hand out to say let's talk in breadth.

Channon: Richard.

Audience 10: Is this not on? Should have turned it on for me.

ARI's are not seen as being fully legit. What are your strategies to overcome that? This is just what I think is absolutely necessary. I've been a part of an ARI my entire artistic existence and could use some more, so I'm interested to hear what you're going to say.

Channon: I think you're right in a sense, we've grown up in the shadow of a lot of the issues that you're involved in. I think that really encouraged a generation of young Queensland artists to get involved in this kind of activity. I think for me, what I noticed as I have kind of gone through different levels of organisation and felt like I was sort of an agent within those organisations. I eventually retreated out of the larger institutions and deliberately chose to stay within smaller organisations, artist-run organisations, artist-centric organisations.

And for me, what I found was that I wanted to use my understanding of that hierarchy to be able to speak quite stridently about the value of these really artist-centric organisations to these other organisations. And they also use institutional structures for the betterment of artists. So if I could stomach those things, right? So not everyone is comfortable to do that, but I sort of grew up in a lot of political action, right? So I was like, I've missed kind of the high points of community radio, I didn't grow up ... I just grew up in the shadow of [inaudible

00:42:12] and so I didn't really have any kind of cause to kind of struggle with. I was pretty privileged as a white, straight guy, so no problem.

This was my chance to try to put a case for what I saw as a part of the sector under pressure but a part of the sector that adds huge value to the whole sector. I sort of built my organisations that I was involved with as [inaudible 00:42:39] as possible so that they could collect history and speak across a decade so [inaudible 00:42:44] is a decade old now. Again evolved with BOSS and tried to build up that organisation and when it did get funding, to try to use that to create advocacy bodies to advocate for that part of the sector. Really to try to use those institutional structures to build trust with the gambit of the sector from funding bodies to the state galleries to NAVA to others, and then be able to kind of create, to be able to channel this kind of knowledge through ... and other people's stuff, other people's work, it's already been done. Try to channel it through and then that way legitimise the knowledge that's been.

Llewellyn: I think I'll just add to that about being legit and I think in the past couple of years, for me the process of ARI's incorporated off the profit associations that have constitutions aboard a popular policy procedures, health and safety. It sounds painful but this shit actually helps. And then we start having bargaining power with councils, with our state, with departments and this is actually really sensible processes and they're not selling out, they're like ... Not for profit institution is like a radical socialist collective, you know? You've got to stop thinking about it as a big corporate, cause it's really not.

Audience 10: Part of that problem with the corporatisation. Precisely, we live in a corporatised world. We are living in the private, we're going to corporatise. That's what I think. We do that through the guys at the very bottom, the grass roots. We artists need to get together. We need to get our shit together, become incorporated and take advantage of all the like of perks that are available to the corporations. This is democracy. Let's patricipate.

Audience 11: Sorry, I'm Grace, I'm from Constance ARI in Hobart and I just thought I'd speak because we are an Arts Australia Institute from being around since 2003 but we actually abandoned our gallery space in 2015 and we've been sort of working from a nomadic sort of model, sort of project by project basis. And that shift actually allowed us to go from charging artist $900 or $1,000 to a show in our main space to commissioning and paying artists every show that they're in and so [inaudible 00:45:18] wages and above. It was something that was said yesterday as well about people not going to galleries, or people not going to ARI's and that in my experience is just simply not true. And for us concerts happen sort of every like 2,000 visitors to each of our shows, which is a lot of [inaudible 00:45:38] in the chaos organisation in our state as well. Yeah, you know about it. I guess I just found that kind of comment is maybe not so up to date, I think a lot of people ... Well ARI's have really important work in communities in connecting people and audiences and it's not just to do becoming these shows and people coming and seeing it, but there's all of these events and talks and they've become these meeting points for communities as well.

Channon: I think one of the risks for the traditional model of maybe University graduate centric artist-run spaces that they exist completely to BOSS and their communities. They simply channel through graduates or channel through the arts community and they kind of sit on top of their community, and I think that's to their parent right. I think a lot of organisations … and others are really betting their selves much more truly within their communities and try to acknowledge the context in which their kind of residing in.

Audience 12: Just because we exhibit ARI's and I love them and support them, but a criticism I have, experiencing them is like, shoving them in last night, this is a series of questions probably going to be a bit crude. How many black and brown people were at the meeting last night? How many black and brown people are on [inaudible 00:47:04]? How many black and brown people come to exhibition openings? And how many black and brown artists show in your spaces?

Channon: It's true. It's really white. These are white spaces. You can read a really great article by Andy Butler called Safe White Spaces, which talks about this problem. There's not many last night, and they're there but I think that ... So it's not defending or pretending that that's a problem, it's because of the way that those models have developed. A lot of their attachment to who goes to University, who graduates and what kind of career trajectory they've kind of come with. But a lot of spaces are really trying to be really honest about that and flip that model. Seventh Gallery in Melbourne heard from shaken up their board pretty radically, definitely emphasised decolonisation as a main driver for their program. They recently hosted their tour that whole conference supported with decolonising space from the U.S. and really tried. And that included a lot of representatives from each of the organisations and artists and really tried to lay down some serious knowledge and confront those problems. I think it's true, there's no use denying it.

Llewellyn: Yeah, I'd say definitely that's a problem that is being talked about constantly and the key I think we discussed yesterday is not just about representation in the gallery, it's at the top, you know? It's about black and brown people being able to run their own shit and not have to go through a wide institution too. That's a potential kind of avenue for solving the ARI whiteness problem.

Channon: Yeah, we should talk more about it. Was there room for another or should we camp?

Audience 13: Yeah, I've got the mic. [inaudible 00:49:06] from Symbiotic here in Perth, hello. The music industry having decimated itself, DIY labels and Indie labels, they're not called DIY labels anymore, they're just called labels. Half of my question to you would be when do you think we're just called arts organisations or galleries? How long will that be before it's levelled?

Llewellyn: I think it's a really important distinction that we need to make is that an artist-run initiative is an organisation brought by us for the benefit of others. I see this really simple thing of artists need to control means of production, and if an organisation is run by artists, they're owning it and controlling the means of their production. So to me, it's a kind of simple definition. It's cool to have curators and artwork is involved in our spaces but we need to have some kind of solid thinking around what are the function of these spaces? They are for us, they are not for curators to further their curator career or for our art workers to reap the benefits of the work that artists do.

Audience 13: Thank you. [inaudible 00:50:22]

Channon: Thanks everyone, for your time.

Session 2: The Honorable Senator Mitch Fifield

MINISTER FIFIELD: This building is full of art, because this is the physical home of our democracy. One of the underpinnings of our democracy is freedom of speech, and something that gives freedom of speech, life and meaning is artistic expression. So, it's good to be here, and it's good that the collection in this building represents that.

It's probably something that my colleagues don't focus on enough, so your presence here is important. If I could encourage you as you meet with my colleagues over the next few days to remind them of the importance of what you do as an underpinning of freedom of speech in our democracy -- to also remind them that there's nothing inconsistent between art for art's sake and the innate virtue of the creative process, and also the fact that what you do does make a big economic contribution.

I also remind colleagues that the arts isn't something that is just in capital cities. It's in the suburbs, it's in the towns, and that it is something that is core to the lives of people; it's not an add-on, it's not an optional extra, it's not something that's extracurricular.

Also, the importance of our Commonwealth arts infrastructure, the national collecting institutions, AusCo, Creative Partnerships Australia -- that these are things that we should not take for granted, and that it's important that we protect them and defend them, including their resourcing.

Also, we have some great national cultural leaders in our institutions. Let me just pick one to represent them all, the most recent appointment, that being Nick Mitzevich as the new Director of the National Gallery of Australia, who I think is going to be a sensational national cultural leader for the visual arts. He already has been in his previous incarnation, but he's got a brand-new platform to pursue this.

ESTHER: I think so, too. We had the great honour of Nick's hospitality yesterday. He hosted us at the NGA, and we got to hear a lot about his sense of the pivotal and important role of the artist in leading a national cultural agenda. He talked about how it's the NGA's role to amplify the voice of the artist, which was, yes, really, really fantastic.

MINISTER FIFIELD: Did you all like the front cover of the *Good Weekend* magazine a few weeks back with Nick? The brooding, smouldering Nick--

ESTHER: The Bill Henson photo. I did a doubletake. I thought the bloke was selling luxury watches, and I just thought, "This is not our Nick." I thought it was a bit, yeah …
I'm glad you also mentioned the national cultural institutions as well and that broader question of resourcing. Because, of course, we need not only the national cultural institutions to know that they've got the resources to be ambitious, but also, of course, the arts more broadly. There's a couple of things happening at the moment in terms of reviews looking at the major performing arts framework. There was the review earlier this year or probably just some consultation about the national cultural institutions and their framing, and how that then affects how we think about their role in this city and as national leaders.
Can we put you on the spot to tell us what you've got in mind with the exciting political event of the election looming next year; surely you're going to be chatting with those

colleagues and we need to be talking up the arts as well so that we can pull some very, very impressive rabbits out of hats, and look ambitiously at funding for the arts more broadly.

MINISTER FIFIELD: Yes, we should absolutely be ambitious. I think something worth tuning into this week -- today's Wednesday, isn't it? Yes, sorry. I lose track of time in this place. But Russell Howcroft is giving a very interesting speech at the National Press Club.

ESTHER: We don't get to go. We'll hear about it later, because there are a couple of colleagues who will go there at lunch and they'll come and report back.

MINISTER FIFIELD: He's going to be talking a lot about creativity, and we can better harness that. Anyway, I think that's something interesting to watch. But yes, we should, and will, have a long and deep conversation between now and a significant event that will happen next year.

Can I just encourage you -- I think this sector can sometimes underestimate the capacity that it has and the influence that it has throughout the nation. Invite my colleagues to the things that you do. You get a colleague I guess with their defences down and their head in a different space when they're away from here and when they're taking part in the things that you do. It's a really good opportunity to have a conversation with them. Can I encourage you to take up that opportunity, because that will very much assist me in my conversations with colleagues about what more we can do in the future.

QUESTIONER: Pleased to meet you. In Aboriginal culture art doesn't stand alone. Law, language, culture and being connected country is all connected to art. It's all art. Arts funding has to cover all that. That's all.

MINISTER FIFIELD: Law, language, culture, land. I've got it. Thank you.

ESTHER: Who has got a question? I believe Gabrielle, continuing the theme from Gabriel to Gabrielle.

QUESTIONER: Thank you for coming to speak with us today. Yesterday we heard from Fiona Foley, as you would know, one of Australia's most important contemporary artists, who dropped a bit of a bombshell in her talk. She effectively told us that she was defecting from art; that she couldn't do it any longer because it was too hard, because the conditions of making art today are just too difficult. They're angry and they're poor. How can you construct and arts policy that prevents this complete decimation of the arts in Australia that we're seeing today?

ESTHER: Just to give the minister a second to think about that one. Fiona Foley mentioned also yesterday that, in the previous round of the Throsby study for the Australian Council, she had been one of the few, the 6% of artists in Australia, who are able to sustain an income from her work, but now she's not. And that was really chilling for everyone.

MINISTER FIFIELD: Thanks. Well, it sounds like I should talk to Fiona to get her thoughts to--

ESTHER: She's here.

MINISTER FIFIELD: Okay. Hi, Fiona. Howdy. You are being spoken of as though you are no longer with us. But let us do that, if you are here for the next day or so. We will catch up and do just that.

I hope in what I said earlier I wasn't conveying that the arts only mattered in terms of freedom of expression. It's just that that was something appropriate to make note of while we're in this place. Yes, the most important thing that the arts does is to help us make better sense of the past, to understand the now and be prepared for the future. It can help us put ourselves in the shoes of others.

Yes, it's absolutely a challenging environment for people to do their work, to sustain an income. I can't give any guarantees or promises in terms of the percentage of the community who might be able to engage full time in their work as a livelihood, but I'm absolutely open to what you think we can better do. I always think the best ideas do come from those who are the practitioners, those who are living and working.

So, Fiona, we can catch up and have a talk about what has changed from before when it was working to now. I would appreciate that opportunity. Thank you.

ESTHER: We don't have time for more questions. He does have to go. But thank you, Minister. I also want to emphasise what the minister said about us speaking to his colleagues. We have some of them coming and joining us at lunch. We can always invite them to things, but the minister's work is strengthened and emboldened when everyone in this House is hearing from us constantly that the arts is important to us.

Often what makes the minister's role difficult is having to have those conversations with colleagues, who are like, "Oh, I haven't heard about that lately. Oh, is that in my electorate?" We all need to work hard to overcome that. I'm glad you mentioned that. Thank you for joining us this morning.

Thank you so much. Appreciate it.

Session 3: How to create policy change with pvi collective

KELLI: As Esther mentioned, my name is Kelly McCluskey. I'm an artist from PVI collective, a tactical media art group based in Perth. We work with disruptive technologies and participatory game play, as you will see, as strategies for activating audiences and collectively grappling with an unstable 21st century.

I wanted to just extend a special thanks to NAVA for being so responsive to artists' voices here today. I think that's great. Thank you for being so responsive to artists' voices. I think that's really important.

I wanted to say thankyou to Parliament House for letting us all through security, which is pretty amazing, and also to this brave and formidable bunch of players who we have with us today, and they're going to be live play-testing what we're calling -- and I'm sorry, Esther, I should have told you about the name change -- disobedience rules, the policy edition.
Just to give some context as to the origins of this work, 50 years ago American activist Howard Zinn argued that every democratic society needs the agitational force of civil disobedience to not only hold those in power to account but to express collective desires for change and refocus political agendas through nonviolent means.

Disobedience Rules is a live-action board game that aims to put this to the test by gathering together community leaders and change-makers around this very play table to provoke healthy debates on the future of civil disobedience from a creative perspective.

Our brief from NAVA was to work with them to develop a special edition, which unpacks the politics of policy change, looking at ways in which arts policy and the arts in general can cultivate more political traction, and our brief to ourselves I guess was to try to be playfully agitational.

That is where our players come in.

On stage today, we're super lucky to have representatives from the media, the government policy arena, obviously the leading arts advocacy body and independent artists. Welcome, guys. I'm going to introduce them one at a time.

Somebody who needs no introduction is really the campaigner Esther Anatolitis. As we all know, as CEO of NAVA, Esther is a writer and cultural critic with an interest in how art creates public space in all its forms. Welcome, Esther.

Gina Fairley. Gina is a writer who is interested in art that flourishes within the gaps and hyphenated spaces. She's worked extensively across Asia and the US and is the visual arts editor of Arts Hub. Welcome, Gina.

Joe Toohey. Joe is the director of Regional Arts Victoria and treasurer of Footscray Community Arts Centre. In accepting that role, Joe had said it's the role as a straight white male that I was born to play. Looking forward to some serious mansplaining from you there, Joe, today. That would be great. Yes, sorry, thank you. Welcome, Joe.

Also, we have Hania Radvan. Hania is the CEO of the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre in Penrith, Western Sydney. Hania was formerly the head of the Northern Territory Government, NT, where she led policy, programs and funding as well as delivering the regional arts fund. Welcome, Hania.

We also have the wonderful Gabrielle de Vietri with us today. Gabrielle is an artist whose collaborative work is big on ethics and impact. She's the founding member of the Artists Committee, who successfully ended the NGB's commercial partnership with Wilson Security through a series of unsanctioned performative interventions. The Artist's Committee's most recent project is Arts Log, an online database for artists by artists that shares experiences about artist payments and negotiations. I encourage everybody to check it out. It's really an important gathering of information. Welcome, Gabrielle.

All right. The rules of the game are simple. Players will step up to the play table, roll the dice, and move their uncivil servant figurine around the play table anticlockwise. They'll land on a category, and when they land on one of those categories it will trigger a question from me, a scenario or provocation to grapple with. The game categories are -- and there's quite a lot to take in -- sustainable truth, media misconceptions, how artists are represented in the media, sonic rights, how to be heard, how do we raise our voices, united front, group based challenges for the whole team to enjoy, municipal unrest, how do we galvanise support collectively as an arts sector, ocular welfare, where do we need to focus our gaze, what's important at the moment, and a wild card where you can select your own category.

In addition to these cards, each player has been issued with their own “shoutocracy” card. If you could hold them up now. Yes. If you see a player raise this card, they're in need of some serious help from you guys, because your job, amazing audience today, in typical parliamentary fashion, is to brazenly yell out anything that pops into your head to either assist or unsettle the players.

What we thought we could do is actually just have a live test of the “shoutocracy”. We thought it would be good to practise this so everyone is feeling comfortable and confident with it.

If we could all just take a deep breath and close our eyes. We're going to transport our imaginations of few corridors away to the House of Representatives and insert ourselves into question time. Yes, question time, that noble democratic tradition which sees our fast-witted politicians in full intellectual flight handing around lumps of coal and wearing burkas.

Let's insert ourselves into that room and see if we can blend in. Okay. “Shoutocracy”, if we could start with a bit of a collective murmur, which could be something like (soft murmuring). Very good.

I would like us to bear in mind that the Australian parliament actually has been labelled the rowdiest, most farcical Western parliament in the world. Can we now try some serious disagreeable grunts and complaints?

That's great. I wonder now if we could actually –

INTERJECTOR: Show us your policies!

KELLI: Thanks, mum!

I wonder if we could try using our words now. I'll give a quick test question thrown out. “Shoutocracy”, you can yell it back.

Why doesn't the current government have a federal arts policy?

Great. This is going to work so well.

Okay. Are we ready, players?

Should we do it?

Great. Let's play. Thank you for that, “Shoutocracy”. Your time will come. We have 60 minutes to play, give or take. Let's play disobedience rules, the policy edition. Somebody is going to be keeping time. Esther, I was going to invite you to give the first roll of the dice and pick your uncivil servants.

All right. Okay, what have we got? You've rolled it. We can move wherever you like. So maybe just start from here. What have you got.
Wildcard.

Oh, that's boring. Pick a section.

ESTHER: All right. Sonic rights.

KELLI: Sonic rights. Okay, so this is how to be heard. Can you grab your mic so we can hear you?

SPEAKER: Sonic rights.

KELLI: All right. This one's called tactical media, Esther. It's time for some corrective intervention. You're an artist who's managed to sneak a portable Bluetooth speaker into the House of Representatives chamber during question time. What is your speaker going to communicate in order to have an impactful presence in the chamber? I'm just asking that one for a friend. You've got a portable speaker.

SPEAKER: Oh my God, okay. First of all, I’d put it on the Dispatch Box. That's the fancy box that they stand on when it's their chance to speak. It's going to whisper to them subliminally, I think, while they're speaking and it's going to be kind of -- it's going to be a range of really compelling kind of counterproposals that are just infusing the mind with ethics that are just radically like right now.

KELLI: Okay.

SPEAKER: It's going to be subliminal and it's going to be a bit radical.

KELLI: Yes.

SPEAKER: But it's not going to be a loud speaker.

KELLI: Subtle, whispering, subliminal?

SPEAKER: You might call it brainwashing, but I prefer subtle, subliminal, let's just, you know -- one by one as they step up to the Dispatch Box they'll come around to our way of thinking.

KELLI: Great. What do we think of that, “Shoutocracy”?

SPEAKER: I think you can do better, Esther. Sit yourself back down. Come on.

KELLI: All right. Who's up next? Joe.

Joe, if you could roll the dice and then pick a figurine and then grab the mic. Four.

JOE: I want a blue one.

KELLI: Blue one? I need a bit more specific. Ocular welfare.

JOE: Ocular welfare.

KELLI: Ocular welfare. So, where do focus our gaze, what do we need to be focused on? Okay, Joe, this one is for scrapbook. In trying to define ourselves as professional artists we may have unwittingly formed our own elite, creating a divide with some of our biggest grassroots supporters, the hobbyists. How do we recognise participation in the arts at all levels and create unity across our sector without bruising professional egos?

JOE: I have the "Shoutocracy" card up my sleeve. I think the statistics bear out the problem that you've identified. The most recent Australia Council report said – almost a doubling in the percentage of people in Australia who think that the arts are not for them or are too elitist or inaccessible. The latest local government Victoria customer satisfaction surveys say that something like 48% of people would prefer a rate cut, their services to be cut, than pay more rates. When asked what the three least important service areas of local government where, guess which one appeared in the top three for all different types of government? By "all types"

I mean metro, regional, rural -- all those different subcategories in Victoria.
The challenge I think about ensuring professional arts are supported, as an oppositional policy person, is that -- I think one of the comments from yesterday was about the grassroots involvement. It's a carefully worded one, because I think there is a sense that that divide is one that has to be overcome to make it -- when Mitch is then talking about the need for those conversations to come, to be heard and repeated to him, from his representatives and his colleagues -- I guess some of those statistics are the reason why. Sorry, I think you were going to ask --

KELLI: I was.

SPEAKER: Waffle.

KELLI: Waffle.

JOE: I thought I was being an oppositional MP.

KELLI: Yes. It really bothers me, though, because those statistics are really horrible. You know, we get in the car or we walk to work or whatever and we listen to the radio, we're listening to music and we're listening to perhaps a radio station that is supported by artists, that supports musical artists or, you know, everywhere we go as members of the public we engage without art realising it, so why is it we're not able to communicate that? It seems so obvious. Why is that it's the first up there in the list of three?

SPEAKER: NAVA is not doing their job.

KELLI: Who's not?

SPEAKER: NAVA.

KELLI: NAVA is not doing their job?

SPEAKER: They haven't actually understood what elitism is and where it fits. Really what they're doing is targeting the people who buy art expensively and it makes it kind of an unaffordable thing. They don't have a clue about artists trying to survive. There's a huge disconnect.

KELLI: There is a huge disconnect. Yes. Okay. I think we should move on.

SPEAKER: I think we're actually playing into them when we say it's oppositional. Look at sport. It's not oppositional. People participate and that's the grassroots, it's fundamental.

SPEAKER: That's elitist.

SPEAKER: Sport is not elitist.

SPEAKER: Yes, it is.

SPEAKER: Elite sport, everyone supports it. I think we actually have to stop making it oppositional and celebrate the entire spectrum, including the professionals, but stop making it an opposition.

KELLI: Thanks for that. Did you want to step forward now, Hania? You're not going to get away with it that easily. Roll the dice. What have we got?

HANIA: Five. That's a wild card.

KELLI: Great. Pick a category.

SPEAKER: Sport!

KELLI: That's elitist.

HANIA: Sustainable truth.

KELLI: Sustainable truth, which is media misconceptions, how we're represented by the media. Okay, Hania, this one is called going mainstream. You have been offered a regular art segment on mainstream TV current affairs show to replace the boring sports ones. Who is your first guest and why them?

HANIA: It has to be Fiona Foley. I think that Fiona's statement yesterday was the most perceptive and damning of the situation of the sector at the moment. We've all read the statistics in the Throsby reports, and we've seen what's happening. It's a long-term trend. If government doesn't address that and we don't make sure government addresses that, then it's really critical for Australia. It's terrible. Our culture is going that way, not that way; it's just not the way we want to go. Let's make it plain. We've got mainstream TV, let's hear it. Let's hear it from the artist who is actually suffering and saying, "I'm a leading artist and I can't continue my practice." There's nothing more poignant than that.

SPEAKER: Time for a press release.

KELLI: A press release would be great. Thank you, Shoutocracy. Thank you. Would you like to sit down? Next player. Roll that dice.

SPEAKER: Two.
Two. Sonic rights, how to be heard.

KELLI: Okay, here we go. Yes! Okay. Gabrielle.
In 2015, in response to artists boycotting the Sydney Biennale, due to the main sponsor's involvement in the offshore processing of asylum-seekers, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is quoted as saying, "I think the artists who have done this have potentially driven a stake not through the asylum seeker policy, I can assure you of that, but through the heart of the Biennale itself. I think it's extraordinary, the sheer vicious ingratitude of it all." Okay, all right. Gabrielle, grab your microphone. You have 60 seconds. You might want your mic so that we can hear you.

GABRIELLE: Do I have to be Mitch?

KELLI: No, you are Malcolm. You have 60 seconds to replace that quote with your own statement, which I have a feeling will be quite poignant, communicating what you wish had been said instead at that volatile time. What do you wish he would have said?

GABRIELLE: Hello. I'm Malcolm. Look, I know that my dear friend Luca Belgiorno-Nettis was very much upset by the slighting of his generosity over time. However, it must remain to be said that, when artists and activists come together they can influence the landscape of this nation.

Belgiorno-Nettis's pride is nothing compared to the damage that was done to his company. He acted properly when he withdrew his 11.7% share in Transfield Services. He acted properly when he revoked the licence to use the Transfield name and logo. It destroyed Broadspectrum and, to be honest, it should have destroyed Broadspectrum, because participating in these industries is no longer viable and it is no longer viable that our arts institutions associate themselves and support and provide marketing and platforming for the evildoings of our time.

KELLI: Thank you. Okay, moving on. Gina.

GINA: Clearly, I'm the last one standing.

KELLI: Yeah. It's a game.

GINA: Okay, orange.

KELLI: Sonic rights, okay. Here's your question, Gina. This one is called pussyfoot. At the 2018 FIFA World Cup final, Pussy Riot invaded the pitch during the match to highlight freedom of speech issues in Russia. At the AFL Grand Final you have a team of artists embedded in the MCG. Around 6.5 million people will be tuned in at home. What creative action will you take to turn this captive audience on to the arts? So, not to antagonise, it's about developing support. What creative action can you do?

GINA: Well, these sporting arenas celebrate with a wave. I think in terms of a collective action of artists and activists a wave sort of makes sense. I think they need to take over one of

the video ports, the big screens, and collectively point action to that screen, which will have some sort of punchy rollout of an image. A message.

KELLI: A message.

GINA: Yeah.

KELLI: What would that message be?

GINA: If we all sat together we're more visible and, if we all stand together, we can make arts and culture part of who we are every day, just like this event.

KELLI: Great. That's a long message. Does anyone have a shorter version?

SPEAKER: Have a map of Australia and the text says “Give it all back”.

SPEAKER: How about simply “Artists matter”?

SPEAKER: What is it?

KELLI: Artists matter. Thank you. That's beautiful. Great. Thanks, guys. Let's move on. Who was next? Esther?

ESTHER: Two. United front.

KELLI: Oh, it's a group based challenge. I feel like we need a theme tune. We'll get to that later.

ESTHER: We’ve got to make one up.

KELLI: Yeah. Okay, this one's called face it. Let's face it, Esther, the media salivate whenever a politician's true self seems to break through their carefully managed image. I'd like to invite all of your fellow players here to please pull a face to the audience that expresses your true feelings about your elected government's position on arts and culture.

I'm going to count you down, like, three, two, one, and then you're going to do it and hold it so that somebody can take a picture. Standing would be great. Thank you. All right, so we're going to pull a face that expresses our true feelings about our government's position on arts and culture. Three, two, one, go.

That's quite dramatic, Gabrielle. Have we got a winner amongst all of that? Yeah. What's going on there, Esther? It's like, “What?”

SPEAKER: Really?
KELLI: Yeah, great. Nice. I like that. Okay, that was a quick one. Let's move on. I'm trying to get through as many as we can. Who’s up next? Thank you.

SPEAKER: Sonic Rights.

KELLI: Sonic Rights; that's popular. Okay. How to be heard. Grab your mic, Joe. This one's called boss lady. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has maintained her arts

portfolio and made it clear that the arts are an inseparable part of what it is to be human. She's working towards integrating arts and culture into all areas of New Zealand society.

The question is not about “why don't we all just move there?” How do we inject this same sense of value in Australia? It's such a massive question. Sorry.

SPEAKER: Can I use the Shoutocracy one for this?

KELLI: Oh, great, do it.

SPEAKER: Just interested to see how this works. The idea is that I put it up?

KELLI: Yes.

SPEAKER: And people can shout out.

KELLI: I have no idea, but that's fine.

SPEAKER: Okay. A Shoutocracy sounds like you shout it out.

SPEAKER: What was the question again?

SPEAKER: The question is, sorry, yes. Jacinda Ardern maintained her arts portfolio. She's integrating arts and culture into all areas of New Zealand society. How do we inject the same sense of value in Australia?

SPEAKER: Make work, lots of work. Get it out there. Talk. Write.

KELLI: Make work, get it out there.

SPEAKER: Make art not war.

KELLI: Make art, not war.

SPEAKER: Artists in schools. Permanent residence.

KELLI: Artists in schools with permanent residence.

SPEAKER: STEM should be STEAM.

KELLI: STEM should be STEAM, nice one.

SPEAKER: Resident artists in Parliament House.

KELLI: Resident artists in Parliament House, yes.

SPEAKER: A support the arts party.

KELLI: Support the arts party? Okay.

SPEAKER: Value our living artists.

KELLI: Value our living artists. Great. Any more? I seemed to cover quite a lot of ground.

SPEAKER: Billet politicians with artists.

KELLI: Billet politicians with artists? Thank you. Great. Who is our next player?

SPEAKER: Roll again.

SPEAKER: Municipal unrest.

KELLI: Municipal unrest, which is how we galvanise support. Okay. This one's called intern. In 1966 the Artist Placement Group began infiltrating industry and commercial organisations with an artist embedded -- that's so funny, that just came -- with an artist embedded. They could radically shift the ways of thinking on how different institutions function. Name a ministerial portfolio that would benefit from an artist's perspective and why? It needs to be one.

SPEAKER: Environment.

SPEAKER: Environment, yes. I think you put an artist into environment. You do that because artists show a different way of analysing a problem and depicting it, and they're great communicators and maybe their artwork and their artists can cut through where logic, science, scientific reports and everything else isn't making an impactful change on people's thinking.

SPEAKER: No, put them in Treasury.

KELLI: Treasury -- creative accountants, and they actually don't see sense, anyway, so I don't think Treasury would notice.

SPEAKER: Health.

KELLI: Health. What was that one? Industrial relations? There's a lot. I was thinking, with Mitch here earlier, maybe the arts? Anyway, it might be worth a try. A lot of suggestions, guys. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Education.

KELLI: Education; still going.

SPEAKER: All of them.

KELLI: We're going to move on now.

SPEAKER: All right. Three. One, two, three. Wildcard.

KELLI: Pick a category.

SPEAKER: I like municipal unrest.

KELLI: Municipal unrest. Galvanise support. Okay, I cannot believe this. This one is called vicious ingratitude. What's going on here. Okay, I need to present you, Gabrielle, with your ethical compass. If you wouldn't mind, just for the audience's sake, explaining what each of those categories say.

Okay, so I can tell what my answer is going to be already. Okay, so decline the money. Donate the money. Take the money and run. Kick up a stink.
All right. So, as you may have guessed, this is the ethical compass challenge. It's time to find out where you as an artist, Gabrielle, where does your ethical compass lie?

Here is your dilemma. You have received a commission to exhibit at a prestigious arts festival. The festival's major sponsor is the notorious Adani Group, with its delightful track record of overseas prosecutions, allegations of corruption, fraud and money laundering, just to name a few. But this is the only gig you have this year and it will provide you with much-needed income to pay your rent. What do you do?

GABRIELLE: Okay. Firstly, do I need to spin or can I just –

KELLI: Oh you can spin it if you want.

GABRIELLE: Okay, well, let's see what the spinner says and then it'll maybe provide me something to kick against to go with. Donate the money? Nothing.

KELLI: Do you want to spin again?

GABRIELLE: It's no point in taking the money and donating it to a better cause, because the bad that Adani is doing --

KELLI: Would that clean it?

GABRIELLE: No, absolutely. I mean, there's obviously no such thing as clean money, but the damage that Adani can do will far outweigh what that same amount of money can do in an opposite scenario. I would collectivise it first. It's not just about me, but it's about hearing what my colleagues also think. I would not participate, but I would also make that lack of participation obvious.

KELLI: How do you mean?

GABRIELLE: It would have to not just be a withdrawal, not just be an absence, but it would have to be manifest in some way. The best way to manifest it with Adani would be to really show what coal can do, to kind of visualise that. I would set up a stand out the front. I give credit for this idea to my partner and collaborator, Will Foster. We would sell iced coal. No, we would give out ice coal free to show how desperate Adani is to wash their image and to give incentives for Australia to accept coal as a really viable excellent economic industry for Australia to be investing in.

All the patrons at the opening would be given a free cone of coal ice cream and their mouths and teeth would become imbued with this kind of black residue. As they smile and

schmooze, they would have dribbles of coal down their chins. The next day they would shit coal and they would not forget that Adani is destroying the planet.

KELLI: Who is up next? Gina. Roll away.

GINA: Two. One two. Unified front.

KELLI: United front.

GINA: Oh, united front.

KELLI: That's okay. Okay, this is our group based challenge. Oh, great. This is called goody bag. Okay. Inside here, this is a bureaucratic goodie bag, which looks suspiciously like a laundry bag. If I can just hand that over you guys don't look and just pick something. Each of you need to reach into this bureaucratic goodie bag and pull out a familiar tool used by government agencies to shift public opinion. Once you've picked one, move it along. They're all labelled. You can sit back down if you like, Gina.

Your challenge is, and I'll have to move the mic around, to tell us how you would use this tool. Okay? If we could just go through and see what you've got. They should all be labelled.

SPEAKER: I have a publicity stunt.

KELLI: A publicity stunt if you could raise that up.

SPEAKER: A task force.

KELLI: A task force. Esther has her own task force people.

SPEAKER: A TV campaign.

KELLI: Yes. A TV campaign.

SPEAKER: A press conference.

KELLI: Press conference. Yes, Gabrielle?

SPEAKER: A diversion tactic.

KELLI: A diversion tactic. A bit slippery, that one. Who will I hear from first? Nobody? Let's just work our way down. You have, what is that?

SPEAKER: A publicity stunt.

KELLI: A publicity stunt. That's right. What would you do if you had a publicity stunt at your disposal?

SPEAKER: What am I using the publicity stunt for? Sorry?

KELLI: You're using it to talk about the significance of the arts sector in Australia.

SPEAKER: The significance of the arts sector in Australia. Why is it a shoe?

KELLI: For shoe throwing.Shoe throwing. It's a thing.

SPEAKER: Yeah, yeah, I'm with you. I was thinking more like chicken suits and things like that. A publicity stunt to raise awareness of the role of arts and culture. If we're going to be throwing shoes, could they be Australian made and designed shoes?

KELLI: It doesn't have to be shoes.

SPEAKER: I know, but I've got the shoe in my hand now. It feels like a useful prop for the tool. That could be a start for it, I guess. The tools that we're using as a publicity stunt could be in and of themselves the artistic object.

KELLI: Okay. Moving swiftly on.

SPEAKER: All right. Task force. Yesterday, in response to the news that there is another efficiency review of public broadcasters that's about to be launched, I facetiously, but actually quite seriously, tweeted what we urgently need is an efficiency review of efficiency reviews to see how efficient they really are.

So, for the task force, I'd put together a force of artists to review task forces and really look at what do they come up with? What are the ethics that are underlying them? What stops the decision making and what stops the action, and how could an artist-led task force actually lead to re-election?

SPEAKER: Great, thank you, Esther. Where have we got to now?

ESTHER: I've got a two-part TV campaign. The first part, all art has been eliminated from life. There is no music. There are no books. There is no clothing except maybe plain underwear. You've got the bleak streets. The museums and galleries are closed because there's no art on the wall. You've got 30 seconds of bleakness, and the second part was you start with the bleakness and you fill it with the artists and actual images and designs and music.

SPEAKER: Beautiful.

KELLI: That's a perfect preamble to what I was going to suggest, so thank you. I've got a diversion tactic, and I've taken this a little bit not quite what you might expect. I'm not trying to distract or conceal from what's going on, but I would actually like to divert the attention that's put into creating all the amazing programs and exhibitions and projects that we all participate and actually stop it all for a month maybe -- no more public display -- to divert all of that energy into actually figuring out how we're going to make it sustainable.

SPEAKER: Are you talking about a strike?

KELLI: I'm talking about an art strike, yeah, an artists' strike on public display for a considerable amount of time, one that we would get the institutions on board with. That diversion time would allow us to reconsider what we're doing and have that conversation in the institutions, and that conversation be pushed up through the funding bodies into our governments as well. I'm serious about that.

SPEAKER: Thank you.

SPEAKER: I'm staging my own press conference for a change. Press conferences are always so contrived in the sense that they are rolling out a feed of sound bytes and, you know, people up front. My action would be total disobedience in the sense of encouraging all those cons and media stuff who actually massage those schedules and put those people up there to actually create dissension by throwing curve balls in there, throwing an artist amongst the panel, throwing an agitator amongst the panel, so the conversation and feed to the news is, from the outset, disrupted. And alternatives rather than that kind of never really balance is actually ruptured in a way.

KELLI: Great. Thank you, guys. Who's up next? Shall we roll on? Let's just stick those props under.

GABRIELLE: Can I suggest something?

KELLI: Oh, Gabrielle! Do you want the mic?

GABRIELLE: Would you like some audience members to play?

KELLI: Oh my God, that would be so great! Tag team with an audience member, who wants that?

GABRIELLE: Who wants to tag team as media? All right.

KELLI: Anyone? Oh no. Everyone's hands are down. There's somebody. Who is that? Up the back, would you like to tag team? Yes, no? Great. Mixing it up, people, let's play. Great. Thank you. We need another female to go -- a little bit of maleness happening. Otherwise Esther is on her own. Thank you, Katie. Actually, Esther, could you pass the mic along. People can just introduce who they are. Just who you are and what you do would be great.

DAVID: David, cartoonist.

KHALID: Khalid --

RICHARD: Richard –

CASPER: Casper --

KELLI: Casper. Thank you. All right, new players. Let's do it. Who wants to go first? Go, Casper.

CASPER: Roll the dice?

KELLI: Roll the dice. Oh, please remember whose figurine was whose.

CASPER: Municipal unrest.
Municipal unrest, okay, which is -- can you grab the mic, oh you've got it. Okay, great, municipal unrest, how to galvanise support. Casper, your question is called crowd fatigue.

You have just received your 20th crowdfunding campaign request and, while you used to put 50 bucks into a friend's project, you're now down to five or ten for each, and only when you can afford it. If crowdfunding is only reaching friends and family, what other strategies can artists use to galvanise financial support? If you have any ideas on that front, please.

CASPER: So, to get money from the community, to try?

KELLI: Or is there another way?

CASPER: Yes.

SPEAKER:(inaudible)

KELLI: That is one option, a one-off.

CASPER: We're told to sell objects, I think, but I think in most cases that's just ridiculous. I've tried to sell objects my whole life, and it's never been an easy run. I've had a lot of problems with that. What would I suggest to do differently?

I think that the best way for artists to make money in society is to be injected into the community. We've been talking about residencies and placements in institutions that don't have artists. My mother is an art therapist and she's just created a career for herself by injecting herself into -- in Adelaide, the health community, like, as an art therapist, and she's made a job for herself as an artist --

KELLI: So, carving out your own job?

CASPER: Yes, exactly. Carving your own job.

KELLI: Alongside the job you do already as an artist?

CASPER: Yes, exactly. You can use or help the community to understand your practice and then facilitate your practice, I think.

KELLI: I see what you're saying. Richard is throwing a Shoutocracy away.

SPEAKER: A lamington drive.

KELLI: A lamington drive. Thanks so much.

SPEAKER: Bake sale.

KELLI: Bake sale, people, just so radical. Anybody? Yes?

SPEAKER: Cut money out except for artist fees -- no materials, no venues, fuck insurance, only artist fees.

KELLI: Cut money out except artist fees. Right. Interesting. Okay, great. That's that one. Dealt with. Everything is gonna be fine. We're going to have a bake sale. Moving on, Katie.

KATIE: Ocular welfare.

KELLI: Ocular welfare. Okay, which is the -- where do we need to focus our gaze. All right, Katie, this one's called wound. Australia is the only Commonwealth nation without an Indigenous treaty. The recently rejected Uluru Statement from the Heart, which sought to embed an Indigenous voice to Parliament in the Constitution, was referred to as too ambitious by Prime Minister Turnbull. What can the arts sector do to enact a voice to parliament that leads towards treaty and truth telling? On the spot.

KATIE: I think that we should be within our own community lobbying every arts institution to have a First Nations person on their board as a starter. So that we can represent as a community that we are putting this first, because from there we can actually show other institutions that we're progressing.
KELLI: Simple start, Yes.

SPEAKER: We have a press release. We need to put something out as a result of this which actually supports a bipartisan approach and totally debunks what came out of his mouth last night.

KELLI: A press release. Okay. You're just obsessing over the press release.

SPEAKER: Yeah, I am.

KELLI: Are you from the press?

SPEAKER: No. I actually think that often we miss opportunities. We've got an opportunity. We could go into question time this time and stand in the public gallery for god's sake.

KELLI: Yeah. We can only do that once. I'm not saying we shouldn't.

SPEAKER: Just something which actually is a public support for the arts.

KELLI: Yes. Public support. Thank you. I'm sorry; I have to repeat what you say so that we can get it down. Great. Does anybody else on the panel want to contribute to that? What can the art sector do to enact a voice to parliament that leads towards treaty and truth telling?

SPEAKER: Just suggest that they give it all back.

KELLI: Give it all back.

SPEAKER: Yeah.

KELLI: How would you do that?

SPEAKER: That's not for me to think. You want us to give you all the answers?

KELLI: How are you going to do it?

SPEAKER: Brush our culture and then you want us to find the way out for you.

KELLI: Not me, personally.
You roll, roll. Okay. Let's do it.

SPEAKER: Four.

KELLI: Wildcard. You can pick whichever one you like, Richard.
Yellow? Sustainable truth, which is how the media represents us. Okay. This one is called mirror, mirror, Richard. It's time to face the ugly rumours. You've got 30 seconds to list as many common misconceptions about artists, how the media sees us, how other industries see, how we're perceived by the public. You need to just let it all out in 30 seconds. Your time starts now.

SPEAKER: Lazy, whinging, layabouts, rolling around

SPEAKER: Elitists.

SPEAKER: Elitists, God forbid that we would have elitism in a country that obsesses over sport. Elite sports, you have --

KELLI: 10 seconds.

SPEAKER: Lazy -- I've done lazy.

KELLI: Five seconds. There must be more.

SPEAKER: Irrelevant.

SPEAKER: Irrelevant.

KELLI: Irrelevant. Perfect. Time's up. Thank you. Okay, great. Off you go. Let is all out, people. Off you go.

SPEAKER: Sustainable truth.

KELLI: Sustainable truth, okay, which is again media misconceptions. Okay, Khalid? Okay. This one is called poser. Inspired by the artful pranksters 'The Yes, Men', you decide to undertake some identity theft by falsely representing arts minister Mitch Fifield on national television. What do you commit to doing on their behalf, Khalid? What you commit to doing on Mitch Fifield's behalf?

Senator Fifield, thank you for joining us today. I believe you have an important statement to make to the arts community here at Parliament House.

KHALID: That's a tough one.

KELLI: Yeah.
KHALID: I mean, everyone had to sit through that and be spoken down too. What I'll do is I'll use the green card, yeah? I'll put it this way and 30 seconds, and you can just shout for 30 seconds. Let's go. Come on.

SPEAKER: Doubling the budget.

KHALID: Bullshit, bullshit, bullshit.

KELLI: Would anyone like to step up and actually take that question?

SPEAKER: “I'll take my hands off the ABC and the SBS.”

KELLI: Take my hands off the ABC. Great. Anyone? Are you ready to roll again or did you want to take on Mitch? No, you want to roll? Go, go, go, that's fine. Mitch is going away. Okay, David.

DAVID: Ocular welfare.

KELLI: Ocular welfare, all right, great, which is where do we need to focus our gaze? All right. David, the Barnaby Joyce affair shows us how easy it is for politicians to exploit our shrinking media and stretch out a story that displaces coverage of issues of national importance. You're planning an impactful arts advocacy campaign and you're worried about getting clear air. But perhaps affairs are good for business. A question to you is, which politician should NAVA have to sleep with in order to get the arts on the front pages?

DAVID: Any … thoughts?
Esther just let you know she's putting out for the arts. Can I do that, too?

KELLI: Putting out for the arts. Yeah.

DAVID: And you've done a great deal for it. Thank you so much.

KELLI: Which politician should NAVA have to sleep with in order to get the arts on the front page?

SPEAKER: Tony Abbott.

SPEAKER: Peter Dutton.

KELLI: … It's up to your interpretation I guess. We've got lots of suggestions now. I didn't hear that one.

SPEAKER: Treasurer.

KELLI: Treasurer.

SPEAKER: Orgy.

KELLI: An orgy with all of them.

SPEAKER: Is this the people who run NAVA or all of … Wait a minute. Who would be the one that we all have sex with?

SPEAKER: I do like Christopher Pyne as a suggestion.

SPEAKER: Christopher Pyne. That really is taking one for the team, hey.

SPEAKER: If it has to be me, then I'll do it. I'm a cartoonist and there are so few ways that I feel I can really give back to society.

KELLI: Thank you.

SPEAKER: That was an unintentional mic drop.

KELLI: Okay, who is next? Let's do it, let's do it. Anybody else want to swap out? Girls to the front; please, can we have some more ladies? Don't be terrified. I can see we have Janet Carter stepping up here. Miranda. We've got Miranda. Anybody else want to swap out? Miranda, Janet, Alex. Where have you gone, Alex? So, we have Miranda, Janet, and Alex. We need two more players, please, or I will grab Esther back.

SPEAKER: Someone from ARI.

KELLI: Great. What was your name, sir? Ben? All right. One more player or I'm just going to roll with it. I've lost a player. Great. Thank you, sir. What is your name?

SPEAKER: Liam.

KELLI: Okay, Miranda, would you like to roll?

MIRANDA: Sustainable truth.

KELLI: Sustainable truth?

MIRANDA: Wait, do I take one of these?

KELLI: Yes.

SPEAKER: It doesn't matter. That's all fallen apart.

MIRANDA: Municipal unrest.

KELLI: Municipal unrest. Great. Which is how to galvanise support. If I could get you to grab the microphone so we can hear you. Okay, Miranda, this one's called loved up. Study after study shows that Australians love and want the arts, but politicians don't see its integral value, and mainstream media don't see it as newsworthy unless it raises controversy. How can the Australian public show their support for the arts in new and significant ways? Miranda?

MIRANDA: I liked the idea of a work strike, but I propose that perhaps all the women that work in the arts, and women were also taking on the larger share in other sectors, unpaid work, strike as well. Perhaps we could get a bit of solidarity between some different sectors where women are doing a lot of the work that is going unpaid. Perhaps that could, yeah, cause a bit of a ripple across a number of different sectors as well.

KELLI: So, a cross-sector strike for all women in their workplaces.

MIRANDA: Who are, I guess, performing work that is undervalued. I mean, we do some workshops on how to quantify that, but that is a big problem in the arts. If we were to go on

strike, we would be left with not a huge amount of administration, education. So, knowledge dissemination. And also a lot of the mechanics that happen.

KELLI: Excellent answer. Thank you. Who's up next? Do you want to roll?

SPEAKER: Three.

KELLI: Three, which is the orange, which is sonic rights, how to be heard. Okay. Liam. Oh, Liam, this one is called drunk tweets. Oh dear, Liam, you fired off some candid and inelegant tweets last night to the new chair of the Australian Council. You've got to miss a turn while you wallow in regret. I'm sorry.

SPEAKER: … being suppressed again.

SPEAKER: Roll again.

KELLI: Roll again.

SPEAKER: The people want.

KELLI: The people want; Shoutocracy has spoken.

SPEAKER: Two. United front.

KELLI: Yes. This is a group based challenge for everyone. You can sit down, Liam, if you like. Okay, here we go.

All of the public art in Canberra has mysteriously melted overnight. We need to use the modelling balloons to sculpt a replacement that creates a vision for the future of politics in our nation's capital.

Okay. I'm going to give you each a balloon and a time limit.

Okay, so we are making, just to recap, and I'm sorry about the noise. This is almost unbearable.

Are we working together?

You have got 60 seconds to make a replacement that creates a vision for the future. I'm really enjoying this -- of politics in our nation's capital. Time starts now, go. This is for the future.

Balloons down. They pop.

What have we got going on here? Something frantic. Janet's got one. Alex is treading on hers.

This one has got to be redeveloped, and we go over here, there's a heart. Do we have any curators in the house? Will somebody come down --

Okay, let's talk for a bit. We have a collaborative one here between you guys. What have we got?

SPEAKER: It's a broken ladder.

SPEAKER: Well, we thought we could restructure things a little bit. We dismantled the current structure by popping, taking the hot air out.

KELLI: I see.

SPEAKER: Yeah. We saw a lot of that before from Senator Fifield, so we kind of took the hot out.

KELLI: Take the hot air out.

SPEAKER: Went back to kind of bare bones and we started from the ground up.

KELLI: Nice.

SPEAKER: Stacking up the pieces.

KELLI: Great. What do we think about it, Shoutocracy? Alex?

ALEX: I'm fairly similar, actually, so putting them at the bottom of the pile as they should be. There are different interpretations, but that's the one I'll say today.

KELLI: Bottom of the pile. Ouch. Janet.

JANET: I had, thank God, some help from the audience because, you know, as one of the few lesbians here I forgot how to make a vagina. This is a reclaiming women's sculptural space within Canberra.

KELLI: Great. Beautiful. Thank you, Janet. And Ben.

BEN: Mine was just a heart. I'm going back to Peter White. Let's just be good people. Let's think and be, yeah, a good society.

KELLI: Beautiful. Thank you, Ben. Thank you. I totally forgot who was next. Thank you. Okay, Alex, roll away.
How are we going for time? Oh God, I could play this all day.

ALEX: Three, one, two, three.

KELLI: Ocular welfare; is it the blue one?

ALEX: Yeah.

KELLI: Okay, ocular welfare. You can grab your mic. Great. All right, so this is where do we need to focus our gaze. Alex, this one's called flip-flop. First, there was going to be an arts policy and now there isn't. And years of sector consultation have gone to waste. Everyone's angry and frustrated and tired and poor, which makes it hard to focus on what's needed. With a federal election coming up, what's the third step towards regaining collective focus?

SPEAKER: But that's not a hypothetical, is it?
Well, the first step to gaining collective focus is things like this. And so congratulations, NAVA, for doing this. The second step is to understand that we can do nothing on our own. We have to collaborate in every possible way. That is by thinking together, by acting together, it's by researching together, it's by doing together. That's what we have to do. We have to make those spaces to do it. We have to fund ourselves to do it. We have to be very clear about sort of stuff we're going to focus on. The critical thing is to not lose heart. We can't lose heart, we just have to do it.
KELLI: Thank you. Alright. we're running out of props and questions. Janet.

JANET: Two.

KELLI: Oh, united front. Okay. This is a group based challenge again. Okay, this one's called excellence. Do you want to grab the mic and sit down? Okay. Only 62% of the Australia Council's 177.1 million budget goes to the 28 major performing arts companies in uncontested recurrent funding. Only 62. The NPA review is currently underway, with the intention of strengthening its framework. A question for everybody I guess here on the panel is, what should the review recommend? What should the NPA review recommend? Janet, you can kick it off.

JANET: Okay, I come from a theatre background so …

BEN: Let's bring it out to the people. Let's get out of those established buildings and institutions and bring it into the streets.

KELLI: Great. Thank you, Ben.

Alex, NPA review -- what should it recommend?

ALEX: Expand, grow the bloody pie. Don't fight each other. We've actually got to grow it. That's what we have to fight for.

KELLI: Yes. Grow the pie. Liam.

LIAM: We actually solved this one this morning on the car ride here. We solved this question.

KELLI: Oh, you're kidding?

LIAM: Yeah.

KELLY: Great.

LIAM: We decided that all the artists runs are going to get together, take that money and put on a Moulin Rouge that travels around every RE in Australia.

KELLI: Genius.

LIAM: That's the recommendation.

KELLI: Genius.

LIAM: We're currently doing casting calls for Ewan Macgregor's role.

KELLI: Good to know.

SPEAKER: 62% out of how much?

KELLI: 177.1 million going to the 28 major performing arts companies.

MIRANDA: So, I think there are partnerships then from those institutions that are getting that money with smaller grassroots institutions in performing arts and outside performing arts sectors.

KELLI: Can we hear Miranda? Okay, good. Yes, sorry.

MIRANDA: Some more innovative modelling, I think, as to how we can benefit the whole sector and also stress that they're not in silos; information that is created, cultural material that's created within the performing arts doesn't just stay there. It's part of a kind of, or should be anyway, a broader discourse. I think some of these exciting kind of partnerships, like, whether it's through education, programming, exhibitions, whatever it is, some cross-cultural stuff, would be great.

KELLI: Great. Thank you.

JANET: Having come from a theatre background, I can at least to some extent, speak on behalf of those major theatre companies. They feel incredibly poor and incredibly hard-done-by. I know. It's genuine. They feel that they're struggling. I think that's consistent across the arts. The only thing that I want to say is that we need to look down and we need to protect our most vulnerable. So, yes, we can say we can try and collaborate with those companies. They're going to protect what they have. That's the nature of it. I've worked there. I know that that's what they do.

We also as artists within our silos try to protect what little we have. I'm asking us to change that, to turn that upside down, to be a little bit socialist, leftie, feminist, and to actually look to those who are most vulnerable first and protect those who are most vulnerable first.
So, yes, we're going to struggle to get any of that 62%. You know, if we can take the little bit that we have and we can turn that upside down.

KELLI: Great, thank you.

SPEAKER: Offer them 30%.

KELLI: 30% -- negotiation. Okay, thank you. It's all gone very quiet. Do we need to wrap it up? I think we do. Esther is kind of, sorry, getting carried away. Okay. Can we have a big round of applause?

We're available for weddings, parties.

SPEAKER: Thank you so much to Kelly McCluskey from PVI -- and everyone who Shoutocracied and everyone who was brave enough to come down and take part. Thank you. Tell us about this game in the context of PVI's work.

KELLI: As I said in the intro, it had its first iteration in South Africa earlier this year as actually the split-site work that took place. The board game was played at a TV studio with some grassroots leaders from different disciplines, not artists at all actually, much more community leaders.

The essence of the work, as I said at the beginning, was to look at kind of unpacking the potential for creative civil disobedience and I guess really coming off the back of the Occupy movement and its self-proclaimed failures. You know, these old paradigms of protest and occupying aren't working anymore. Is there anything new that we can generate? So, that's where it was coming from in its essence, I suppose.

So, in South Africa we gathered together community leaders at a TV studio. There were little situational cameras embedded. There was a big board, like a poker table, actually. It had quite a presence. We had an amazing transgender MC who was madam speaker. They kind of MCed the game in a much better way than I just did.

So, simultaneously, whilst this is being filmed in a TV studio, out in the public space in Bloemfontein in South Africa, which is a really strange area of South Africa but has a very rich history in terms of its lineage or its relationship to government and judiciary actually, in a public space there was a massive great big TV screen where this was being shown. These uncivil servants were actually real artists who were out on the streets in that public space.

We had the option, our madam speaker could, if she felt as though the answers that were coming up ... completely different set of questions by the way. But the answers that came up, it was all about, okay, it's all very well to have new ideas and to have crazy thoughts but how do we put them to the test? What is their real-world impact? So, the job of the artists was when the madam speaker decided that it was good to take it to the streets, she pressed this button. Music played, take to the streets, and then the uncivil servants had to try to interpret that response and try to put it to the test.

It was about kind of crash testing new forms of creative civil disobedience right there and then. You know, I won't say it was a perfect …

Session 4: How to redress inequity with Abdul Abdullah

… that the minister mentioned this morning. So, in the Senate as well as in the House of Representatives member after member ... there goes my phone. Member after member -- just leave it there -- has been getting up to speak in support of that motion and to condemn what the senator said last night.

Obviously, we can have a look at that later. I'm sure there are lots of clips that are circulating and there will certainly be some pretty fucking entertaining *Hansard* to read later on.

I did just have a good chat with Penni Pappas, who is the advisor for Maria Vamvakinou. Maria, many of you may know her personally. She has committed a lifetime to what used to be called ethnic affairs, but to advancing the cause of multicultural Australia.

I also had a quick chat with Tony Burke. We've been texting for the last little while. He was hoping to come and join us 1.30, but then had to scramble back to the house. As I mentioned earlier, the speech that he gave last night, which was the first in response to what Senator Anning said, is really worth seeing.

That brings us very much to our theme in kind of a grim way about how to address inequity. It's really important that we have some conversations that are open and comfortable, and uncomfortable, and allow us to make comments and ask questions and really think about what are commitments that we hope and expect institutions to make to make spaces open, accessible, diverse in all the ways that are important to us all. What are the commitments that we can each make as individuals?

The best way to ask the question of how to address inequity is, of course, to check our own privilege, understand where we're from, understand when we're in particular kinds of engagement, whether they're individual or institutional, about the values, the approach that we're expecting the person that we're speaking to or engaging with to condone or buy into the underlying values.

What is it that sustains inequity? How can we encourage people to afford others both the specificity and the complexity that they afford themselves?

I was really struck at one of the round table discussions that we've had across the country in the last little while. This was the Melbourne one recently, and we asked the question, what are the key issues in this state? We covered all predictable pre-election type things, and then Shannon Goodwin reframed the conversation around the notion of inequity, inequality, rising inequality, and how important it is that this is something that we need take personal, professional, institutional, whatever powers we wield responsibility for.

To begin, to open up our conversation, and we've got an hour, obviously not nearly enough time, but like all of the sessions in Future Forward is just encouraging us to begin and open up a discussion. Tell each other what we need to hear, tell NAVA what we need to hear so we can keep acting, advocating, developing approaches, and we'll take a break after this and come back and look at advocating.

Abdul Abdullah is an advocate who has worked in a few different places. He's from Perth. Some of us know he didn't have the best time when he was in Melbourne. He's now based in Sydney. We're going to start by just listening to Abdul's perspective, and then we will open up, we'll have a bit of a chat, and then we will devote most of the time to discussion and questions from all of us. Abdul?
ABDUL: Okay, hello. First off, I'd like to acknowledge that we're on Ngunnawal and Ngambri land. I would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal people in the room. I acknowledge that the rest of us, in one way or another, are implicit in an occupation and, speaking now, I want to make sure that this next bit ... I'm not speaking to the black and brown people in the room, but the rest of us, the rest of you. You have to get your shit together. Whether you like it or not, the society we live in, explicitly or implicitly, is underpinned by a white supremacist ideology. The white Australia policy is an explicitly white supremacist ideology, and yesterday it was endorsed in parliament. Fuck the parliament. It makes me so mad. My mum

used to talk about when I was a teenager and how angry I was and how unhappy. You know, I am a pretty optimistic person at heart. That's why I'm always late for meetings, but really I'm just funnelling things another way.

I wanted to talk particularly about what the senator said. He wanted to end all immigration by Muslims and non-English speaking people form the Third World. He specifically singled out Muslims and he lied about Muslims. I'm a Muslim and there are Muslims in the room. He lied when he said that working-age Muslims are mostly on welfare and don't contribute. He lied when he said that African Muslim gangs are terrorising Melbourne suburbs.

John Howard, as bad as he was, he led us into unjust wars and did all those horrible things, tampered in any number of things, but even he took a principled stand against the One Nation Party and what they were espousing.

SPEAKER: He took his time, though. He took his time. He stretched it out. He allowed his party to become extreme and even kind of radicalised. That sewed the seed, and eventually he did; you cannot waste any time with this shit. It's immediate; the comment has to be immediate.

ABDUL: Absolutely not, and in no way endorsing the Liberal Party ever.

SPEAKER: I didn't mean to speak out against the whole party. I specifically want to speak out against John Howard on that issue, because I reckon that that was the beginning of a turning point.

ABDUL: I've had the Labor shadow arts minister, the ex-one, Mark Dreyfuss –like, I interviewed him. We were talking about arts policy, and then when I asked him about refugee policy I got 10 seconds radio silence. This is the political environment that we find ourselves in.

The parliament doesn't represent me, I don't feel. Being in this room, being in this place and feeling like ... growing up I felt unwelcome in most public spaces, but this place in particular I feel sick to my stomach.

SPEAKER: They haven’t gone out of their way to welcome us today, have they? We’ve got to provide some feedback.

ABDUL: I wanted to bring up some points. We're going to have a look at a few different things. We're going to look at a whole bunch of different ... not a whole bunch, but we're going to look at a few different perspectives on accessibility.

When I'm talking about it, I guess I'm talking about equity in access to opportunity and access to conversations.

Everyone in this room is here and has in a way has access, so I feel less obligation to the people that came before me and more obligation to the people and the young people that come after me. That's how I see my role as an artist.

What I'm trying to do is reach [inaudible 00:08:12]. Actually, I'm taking what my mentee told me when he came to my studio. I'll show you a picture of him, but he comes to the studio

every couple of weeks. I asked him, "What do want to do?," and he said, "I want to reach a thing, and teach a thing like what you're doing." I thought that was a really beautiful thing, so

I'm reaching a thing, teaching a thing, and then he's going to reach a thing, and he going to teach it to whoever's next. Yeah, a really beautiful sentiment.

One of the things for the others in the room and also everyone else is to consider what role you play, what role you play as artist and what role you play in this political discourse. I'm going to quickly go through this presentation. I won't take long, and I really want to open it up. My phone keeps ... I've got notes on my phone, so I'm trying not to be rude. I'm not checking my Instagram.

To give a little bit of background about me and a couple of my privileges actually is that I'm the youngest of three brothers all called Abdul. One here in the second row. There's a couple of peculiar things about me and my two brothers. My sister, who is the oldest and not pictured, she runs a boxing gym and the rest of us went to art school. There were three Abduls who all went to the same art school over a 20-year period. [inaudible 00:09:28] he was actually a mature-age student. He finished in 2012 and he's living as an artist now. I'm living now as an artist and my oldest brother, who finished like in '94 or '95 or something like that a long time ago, he went on to run the art department in West Australian Correctional Services. Now he runs education in West Australian Correctional Services, so when I go out to schools I go, "If you ever get in trouble in Perth and you want to paint a picture, ask for Abdul and he'll give you a paint brush."

This is me and my oldest brother. I like this picture. When I'm talking about access from a personal point of view, my first access that I can remember to art, the benefits of it and the value of art, came when I was very, very little, about this age when my mother was a seamstress and she'd go into the city in Perth and go into Lincraft. The city is hot, it's full of racist people who always said shit to her, but a place that she felt cool and a place that she felt safe was the Art Gallery of Western Australia. This is a picture of the Art Gallery of Western Australia and so every time we'd go to the city to go Lincraft, she'd take me here and wander around. Whether she liked it or not, one of the pieces that I remember early ... I don't remember this specific work that I'm going to show you, but it's a similar work. It was coming across [inaudible 00:10:40].

My mom is a little brown lady wearing a scarf and I don't know if she necessarily ... She has conservative political values and she wouldn't necessarily want me to engage with works like this at my age, the age that I was, but this sort of opened things up for me about what art could be and what could be articulated with art. It's not necessarily just nice pictures on the wall. It's a whole other thing and that kind of got me started.

Now I live in Sydney and I work a lot with young people outside of my practice, and it's all part of my practice. I see it as one sort of thing, so working and going to schools but also working in outreach, going to juvenile justice facilities, speaking to young people at risk, but I think there's value in that. Looking at our main institution, the biggest institution in New South Wales, it looks like a courthouse. It's one of those imposing places. In talking to my partner, she was working with some kids from western Sydney there and they talked to her about no-go zones, invisible no-go zones that were things that weren't for them and I totally relate to that. Just Parliament, the whole place is not for me. I can see it in what those kids are saying.

If your experience with the courthouse isn't like your parents are going to sue someone and it's maybe something else, then this is a pretty imposing building to go to. The first time that I can remember going to the art gallery in New South Wales was the Archibald in 2011 and I really felt like an interloper, but it was a lot of fun. This is when I got to meet [inaudible 00:12:07] for the first time. Then me and my brother came along and we had a bit of a party, but yeah, it's taken a lot to feel comfortable there and now I feel part of my role, especially with talking to young people in spaces like this, is to make them feel comfortable and to be able to claim ownership in that conversation and being welcoming and inclusive.

This is an example of some of the kids that I work with, and I really enjoy it. I'll go and do workshops and do talks. Generally, it's a painting workshop or a talk, but I'm not there to teach them how to paint. That's a happy aside. What I'm there to do is to essentially be a role model or to demonstrate that their story hasn't been written for them yet. I'm not trying to glorify the position of being an artist and I'm not training them to be artists in any way, but just saying you can kind of do what you want. You don't have to go down any particular way. You can sort of mold your own destiny so to speak, but it's really fucking difficult when there are people in Parliament telling them to go back to where they came from. It makes life much harder.

This is an example of some of the kids I'm working with. This is one of the outcomes at the camp down at Central campus and that has a really, really fantastic Aboriginal program, like really love what they do in western Sydney. This is a bit from [inaudible 00:13:29].
Welcome everybody to [inaudible 00:13:32] Centre [inaudible 00:13:33] through you.
It's hard for me to imagine an Australia that has come to terms with the reality of its identity.
This is Emanuel. I've been working with him at [inaudible 00:13:49] in Claymore. [inaudible 00:13:51].
The reality of its demographics and the reality of the cultures that exist here.
[inaudible 00:13:58].

These are the works that-
Just a little snippet and Emanuel, who is the firsthand person who is in the video, so I've been mentoring him recently and he comes to the studio. He wants to be an art teacher, so we make paintings every couple of weeks. Levi, there was a particularly touching story with Levi, who was second. He came in, he came to the exhibition and he saw Slottie's artwork, who is like [inaudible 00:14:29] heritage and saw Simone Patton's. That's all it took for him to go, "Oh that's something that I relate to," and the next week he came back with his family and introduced them to the space. Then they've been returning to Camp [inaudible 00:14:40] Art Centre [inaudible 00:14:41], so that I think is one of the really powerful things. This isn't really addressing the policy end. This is sort of addressing what we can do ourselves to build access to those who come next.

I used to host a radio show. I won't go into it too much, but one of the tricky questions that I'd ask people, which is sort of unfair but not unfair at the same time, I'd ask them ... If an artist came into the space, I'd ask them who their work was for. Most people had never even considered it. When people would say, "It's for everyone," there is an element of privilege in that because they never had to see themselves as anything other than the normal. We'll talk about what's normal very soon I think.

My sound byte when I'm asking who I'm making work for, it's who I'm thinking of when I'm making a work. I'm building a legacy, a cultural artifact for that nine year old version of me in East Cannington or Sunshine or Frankston who can see themselves or a portion of themselves

a relatable part of our shared experience demonstrated in these institutional spaces. Their narrative is somehow reflected, but that claiming of their experience is not speaking on behalf of anyone. I'm not making work about anyone, but making work for people and speaking as a member of these communities.

I also go to private schools, but often I'm the first Muslim person they've ever met. I can hopefully have a positive contribution to that conversation.

There's my brother and I working out at a program through Camp [inaudible 00:16:14] Centre again. Then out in western Sydney, going to lots of different schools and having these conversations. One of the difficult things, like I went to a juvenile justice centre in Melbourne a couple of years ago now and there was a young Muslim man there who was a repeat offender. He'd been ... I won't go into the details, it doesn't matter, but he's one of the guys who gets angry and once he gets angry there's nothing really ... You can't really pull him back in. He just kept going, "Brother, you don't fucking understand. They fucking hate us. They just fucking hate us," and there was nothing that I could say at that point to get him out of that cycle. It's not my responsibility necessarily, but it was just heartbreaking to see that someone so young, they're fucked. Not fucked. You know, their situation is and it's really, really heartbreaking.

There's only so long that I can be relevant to these kids like ... It does look like me. I don't know how long I'll be invited to schools and I don't know how long I can relate to these kids, but we're building a generation link so it's still caring for each generation as it comes. One of the things that I do when I [inaudible 00:17:43] the last painting I did when I was in high school. It was actually just after high school, but don't tell them. It was a self-portrait of me when I was an angry 19-year-old, so I had a long, beautiful, flowing mullet. I had been banned from the shopping centre near my house and the shopping centre near my school. I was having a good time, but I wasn't yet able to articulate what was burning up inside me. I wasn't able to articulate the siege mentality that I felt within me and my friends and my community, and the one I was talking about before about feeling unwelcome in spaces. That was just normal and it's really hard to articulate if you've been through it.

When I was talking to that group in the juvenile justice facility, they were all 16 and 17, they were all boys, they were all kids of colour, so really it was a cultural program for kids that weren't Indigenous. They had an Aboriginal cultural program and this was sort of a different cultural program apart from them. A lot of the kids, African kids, like ... Yeah, it was a big mix. Anyway, but none of the kids in the group knew what the word stereotype meant, which is also disheartening. We sort of explained it and everyone knew the sentiment of stereotype, but none of them could sort of figure it out. The example we have is the people that security guards are following in shopping centres even if they haven't stolen anything. That's stereotyping.

Also, one of the things that I've tried early is looking for mentors, like whether Richard liked it or not, I see him as a mentor. I learned not in a mentorship relationship, like a normal mentor relationship where it was like a sit-down structured thing where someone teaches you lessons, but just as a role model, I learned so much. This was in 2012. I met Vernon [inaudible 00:19:39] in the year previous and I went to go visit them in Brisbane and [inaudible 00:19:45]. Yeah, fantastic. It was an amazing day, this one.

With the work that I produce thinking of those young people, what I'm trying to do is make work that has multiple access points. I talk about this a lot. It's that whether you're coming at

it from the historical point of view, philosophical, theoretical, aesthetic, political, what I'm trying to do is give an access point to as many people as possible so that it's as relatable as possible, but I'm embedding these works with my ideas and unabashedly embedding it with my agenda. I'm a student of history and [inaudible 00:20:23] criticism of one of the things said before. I get a little bit of a tick when white people talk about self-determination when you look at the political and historical context of that phrase. Anyway, I'm ranting.

More work that's sort of embedded with a few different ideas and being able to sort of expand those and have conversations outside of the Australian context. This is my brother and I. My brother has the installation in the foreground called The Dog and then my work called Mission Creek in the background. This is [inaudible 00:20:55] art museum, in New Zealand. Also playing around with different strategies like making these irreverent sort of images that draw people into a conversation that they might potentially, or hopefully, will feel uncomfortable in.

Then a senior artist recently told me to sort of ... "You've got to chill out on doing the television and radio stuff because you want to concentrate on your practice." I do want to concentrate on my practice, but I see the whole thing as platform building. I see the whole thing as my practice and that I can leverage that into speaking about things that I really want to speak about. An example is talking about and advocating for the Human Rights Arts and Film Festival and being a spokesperson for that sort of thing. Getting to do TEDX and to talk about these sort of things. Imagine that, this was a funny one. This is 2,000 kids who at the Imagination something forum at Homebush. They all were like getting autographs from children's television program presenters that I'd never heard of, but it was a fascinating thing.

This is a radio program, David Capra and Nat Randall. I've retired from radio now, but this is the group that we were with. In fact, David Capra is one of the reasons I met ... I won't go into that. That's another story, but Western Sydney is one of the reasons I moved to Sydney. It is the reason after being in Melbourne and white spaces, et cetera. Then getting the chance to do a bit of this stuff, and I work for the ABC now. Maybe I'm a green-y Muslim lefty like my friend, Oz [inaudible 00:22:26] who has been just destroyed by the Daily Telegraph.

Then the opportunity to work overseas and to bring these conversations, to be looking at myself as an artist in the region but also seeing a responsibility as an Australian artist with a passport that I can walk into these countries relatively easily, and so I feel a greater obligation that when I'm there to make myself useful. I won't go somewhere unless I can make myself useful, so I don't want to go to these spaces and take. I'm going to produce work there because that's what I do, but I don't want that opportunity to be reciprocated. I want to make ... Yeah, I need to be able to give something back. Otherwise it's not worth me going. Reggie Handoko, he was in [inaudible 00:23:11], and this was in a village in west [Javla 00:23:14] with David Collins, who is my photographer. He travels with me and he photographs my photographs. We were documenting the voice of [inaudible 00:23:31], who is like a teenage, all girl, hijab heavy metal band that is copping all sorts of shit from where they're coming from. They rock really hard, so we wanted to go there. We took a bunch of photos and then I was talking about having an exhibition or some type of thing, but then ended up just giving them the photos because it felt like the right thing to do.

Maybe I've talked too long. I've talked for a half an hour, I believe, which is longer than I want. I just wanted to mention another point really quickly. What I'm trying to do, so the broad themes of what my work is, is I'm asking you and I'm asking my audience to afford

others the specificity of complexity that you would afford yourself. That's the basis of everything. That's really what I'm trying to get at. The other thing is that my opportunities that I've had have ...

When I was just out of art school one of my peers said, "I wish I had a culture to exploit, to make [inaudible 00:24:33] about." My opportunities haven't come because of my identity. They've come in spite of it and I think that can be said for ... Yeah, take it away, Esther. So much of what you just said [inaudible 00:25:04] me 20 or 30 years ago. Anyway, I want to touch on the specificity and the complexity. I was really struck by those words when you mentioned it, when we were having a chat about what we would talk about today. That just seems so like, yes, it's part of human condition. We accord ourselves this sense, this understanding that there is specific things about us that are complex things about us. We don't generalise ourselves into a place, a politics, and nor do we want to be complicit in that kind of generalising. I think that's a really ... Can we start from that? I'm also thinking about Peter's slide yesterday, about just being good.

I think that's really helpful. I'm not trying to give you a 'poor guy me' story, like I've got plenty of privileges. I'm a man. I get all the privileges of being a man, like we can talk about that. I'm an able-bodied person. I've got all the privileges there. I can walk down these stairs. English was my first language, like I can travel all through South-east Asia and I don't have to know the language. I'm learning. I'm trying to learn, but I can just talk louder in English and someone will understand it.

I wanted to also throw it to Dan, Dan Savage, who is here, to give-

Where is Dan? Back row.

Yeah, right underneath the spotlights.

Hi, Dan.

Another perspective on access.

Hi. My name is Daniel Savage. I identify as a person with a disability. I'm a wheelchair user and I'm a practicing artist. I just wanted to ask a few questions related to this topic to everyone in the room and to [inaudible 00:26:57] to think about the space of disabled people as arts practitioners, as art workers, and as arts audiences. I think it's fairly poignant to note that until Abdul just mentioned it there in my introduction, disability hasn't been mentioned once in this conversation. Thanks. That it's very controlled where people with disabilities have in this conversation itself, the fact that I'm at the back, the fact that I couldn't volunteer to come down for the group audiences and those other kinds of spaces.

I want to ask a question. People with disabilities [inaudible 00:27:38] generally discriminated against in a passive way. It's not done in an active way. We're just not thought of. For example, the fact that it hasn't been mentioned in this conversation and I think everyone should question why that is, why themselves as artists or arts workers or arts organisations that's not involved in the conversation. Possibly, the change needs to come for a whole cultural change rather than where it's currently looked at at the moment as an additional response at the end. [inaudible 00:28:07] include people with disabilities. It's often kind of where we're looked at in that space.

To decide, okay, if there is a cultural change, where does that fit into what we're doing at the moment with the code of practice? Okay, so how is that included in our private practice where we can think about accessibility? Where does that come under us as individuals? What's the role that we play in that conversation as galleries? What's the role that we play in that conversation? What do state and federal bodies bring to the conversation? What does the national gallery play in that conversation and other cultural institutions for their role? Because often again it is passed the buck a little bit about if they aren't doing anything, why should we do anything? It's not our responsibility. It's the artist's responsibility. It's just kind of the conversation has moved on again and again and again.

I think there has been a little bit of an exclusion of people with disabilities. Again, not in an active way. In a passive way and apologised for afterwards, which is often what we get. Then there's a patting on the back when there is any inclusion of people with disabilities, like yay, didn't we do a good job? Now back to the real business of making art. I just wanted to bring that up as a question for everyone. I know there's no way we can kind of come to a conclusion now [inaudible 00:29:21] because the other point is, as well, that the Disability Rights Movement has no decision about us without us. That's kind of our catchphrase and the fact that there will be some people in this room with disabilities that haven't necessarily spoken about that. There's not a lot of people in this room that can directly speak to that as well, so having them not in the conversation in the first place makes it difficult to even speak about. Yeah, that's pretty much what I just wanted to put forth so that people can actually think about.

I loved that, Dan. Can you say that again? The not about us without us?
Not about us without us, and I think that comes across a lot of sectors within the community that aren't included in conversations in the first place, whether it's multicultural, whether that's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, whether that's LGTBI. Often it's conversations that are held without us in a very paternalistic way, that here we'll look after you and we'll do the right thing for you without ever assign if that's what we wanted in the first place.
Thank you so much for saying all that, Dan. Our discussion is going to touch on disability, on gender. We're going to talk a little bit about that later, on Melbourne's next plans following our stuff earlier this year. Also, what you said just at the end there about stuff we all need to do, but also about the conversation that we're all a part of and then identifying or not the choices that we make. Many people know I'm a person with a disability from migrant background. English is not my first language and being in this seat gives me all sorts of privilege given the voice that I have. It's something that in my previous organisations I have made an enormous priority in terms of shifting that culture through the formal things like disability action planning, which is now something that has entered the institutional vocabulary but also around those cultural things about our practices and the decisions that we make and the voices that we open up.

You're also completely right to point out that a venue like this gives you all of, what, two options of where you can sit.

There was one.

One option. Oh well, [inaudible 00:31:49].

Yeah, I was supposed to be up in front.

They changed.

Now [crosstalk 00:31:52]. Security decided it was undue hardship on them to get me to the front, but the option is can I get to the bathroom and go have lunch with everyone else or do I sit at the front the whole meeting.
[inaudible 00:32:09] days ago.

Penelope is pointing out that that only happened two days ago, so we'll give them a whole bunch of information about ... Yeah, just recently we're getting a whole bunch of information about how we're going to make both of the spaces as welcoming and accessible as possible. Yeah, so we'll be providing some more feedback, but I don't want to detract from the rightly dismissive way that you put the apologising later, but I am going to apologise because the conversation and the whole activity should be open to everyone. To have just one place in the whole place that you can sit, that's just not the way that this place should be welcoming. Are there other experiences? I think it would be really, really important for us to open up and have that conversation. Are there experiences that the non-male identifying people of the cultures, or that actually have a culture to borrow Abdul's phrase? Who is the person that said we have no culture to [crosstalk 00:33:17]?

I'm not going to name that.

No. I thought I'd catch you there. I didn't think he'd say it.

Even ... Sorry, I'm interrupting-

No, you're alright.

But [inaudible 00:33:31] obviously I get [inaudible 00:33:34] into things, but I've had people who are considered amazing curators like who are curating to a show go, "Oh this time you're not going to be a token." I'm like, "When the fuck was I a token? I mean, when was I a token?" Anyway ...

I was like last to be on the cover of a disability action plan because I was the easiest disabled person to deal with. I refused obviously. Now, who would like to add to the conversation and share an experience? We can talk about the commitments that we're going to make. There is a hand up the back. Sorry, there are these lights. There are these two lights. I'm going to leave it to Claudia to identify because, I'm sorry, I can't see.

I just wanted to make a point that we have come to Parliament, and this is an arts conference, so Parliament should be coming to us for a 10-minute talk, which we could do by Skype or something anyway. We should be in our natural environment, whatever that is. It's not Parliament. I'm a non-voter and I understand why other people feel the urge to vote for the necessity, but Australia already has a law and a governance system, so I consider myself a non-citizen because I won't vote. A lot of other people only vote because they don't want to get a fine and there are ways around that. You can just fill out the paperwork all the time. When they send you the fine, you say, "I'm not voting for cultural reasons," and we're all sitting here in this room like the crippled child or that red-headed child in the family. Parliament is not in here with us, so our cultural reason is because we are rejected from Australian society. We're not supported, we don't have a policy, therefore we don't have to vote.

We've got a comment just down here. While we get the microphone to you, [inaudible 00:35:37] with her hand up. I haven't got a second one of the ... Okay, Holly, we're going to give the mic to Tess and I can totally understand. When things disappoint us, when there is no policy, we just want to withdraw and disengage and we totally have the right to do that. [inaudible 00:36:00] or not, you absolutely have the right to do that.

But it's not disengaging. If you change the system all you're doing is creating a new thing. It's still engaging, it's still active, it's just in a different way.

Yeah, yeah, and as I was saying in the [inaudible 00:36:16], oh yeah, one thing I really worry about in terms of political disengagement is that quite rightly when we distrust politicians we don't want to engage and then we withdraw. Then we're not actively talking to them and expressing our point of view. Then when we disengage we actually give those people in some ways more power because they're in more control because they're not hearing from us about what we expect. I think it's up to some of us to step back and it's up to others of us to step forward.

When you're engaged you're encouraging them.

Yeah, so how can we master the game?

You change the system. That's the way.

Tess?

The way I feel about that is how can we possibly change the system by doing nothing? There are countries in the world where people are being killed and having violence committed against them, Palm Island, purely for wanting to vote in a democratic system that's not rigged. Here we are in Australia with the right to vote and our Lord Mayor candidate, he would say there are all kinds of issues with the Melbourne Lord Mayor with candidates having enough money to send pamphlets overseas to people that have the rights to vote overseas for the Melbourne Lord Mayor election, which directly affects the cultural policies of Melbourne. I really, personally, I think that it's a huge responsibility for artists to really take a stand and participate in voting if we want anything to happen. As I said, if we don't then we're just absolutely handing power over.

Once you've lost it you can't get it back. To get that back would be 1,000 times bigger job than any position that we're in now.

Thank you to the team up the back who turned those yellow lights off. Now I can see everyone and Abdul can see you all too. That has made a massive difference. Now, who- [inaudible 00:38:51].

I want to hear some more about some experiences of inclusion or exclusion to the extent that we're comfortable to share them, and I want to talk about some commitments that we would like to make. Some non-male identifying artists, there is a person just there.

I just ... How do I put this? I mean, it didn't escape me that the only Parliamentarian that I recognised here today was Pauline Hanson and she wasn't talking to us.

And Ali walked past as well and I really recommend you look at the speech that she gave today.

But I guess coming back to these, I'm interested in how do you avoid being token-ised? What are practical ways to address that, especially because the art sector is one of the most homogeneous sectors in the Muslim regulated culturally sectors and we'd like to think that we're all a bunch of leftys, but that's not true. It's very competitive and it's very cutthroat and it shouldn't be. It's embedded in society, so considering that it's quite concentrated, it's a small group of people, and it is very homogeneous. How does one avoid that? What is a practical way, a practical approach, A, to avoid being token-ised? What's some sort of infrastructure or some sort of policy that can be added?

Also, how is this regulated? How can we regulate this because I feel like I've had conversations like these a lot in my career as an artist. It would be nice to have something action.

Yeah, absolutely.

I think the onus is on us to stop being token-ised. we've got to [inaudible 00:41:20] to the people doing the token-ising.

Yeah, that's what [inaudible 00:41:24].

Yeah, and there is some amazing examples of some institutions in the room as well where leadership is handed over, curation is handed over, and I'm particularly impressed with what I'm seeing down at ACCA and also at Footscray Community Art Centre with leadership programs, with curatorial programs that being people into decision making. How do we hand over decision making? How do we open up decision making?

Look at the history of ACCA prior to this directorship. How many Aboriginal people curated the Australian Center for Contemporary Art [inaudible 00:42:00]? Like one, two, none?
I think there was three, but they weren't included by the actual director of ACCA, included by curators within ACCA.

I was actually going to reiterate what Abdul said, like I come from a migrant family, but I also sort of recognise that I am white or I pass as being white. I think that as a white person it's my responsibility to be trying to make a difference and actually acknowledging my own privilege within that. I think the onus is on us actually to be the people that are looking at our institutions and saying what are we doing to change this? We can't just be constantly expecting people from other cultures or other cultural backgrounds to be putting the pressure on us and I think that was definitely something that I put forward through the campaign when I ran. It's like how do we even look at the buildings that we enter? How do we change those spaces? How do we take institutional settings, like settings outside of those buildings and bring them to spaces that there are cultures that maybe don't want to enter into those spaces?

How do we re-understand on a daily basis how an organisation works? You can include someone that maybe has children, that can't afford childcare, that needs to ... They can't engage on that really intense level, but still wants to engage, and I think actually the onus is on us rather than the other way around.

There's a hand back [inaudible 00:43:42]. Thank you for that. I mean, it's absolutely true. We all have to make our own expectations really clear in particular of the institutions that we want to keep engaging with and that we want to change. Has someone got the mic?

I just wanted to ... Beth can speak to this better than me, but I wanted to give an example of a project that was incredibly successful in Alice Springs that Beth spearheaded. It was called [inaudible 00:44:19] which means a place for language and [inaudible 00:44:23]. It was an incredible project that brought together the Islander community and has actually shifted in quite an impressive way the sort of cultural or the community sensitivity and respect for Islander people in Alice Springs and [inaudible 00:44:51]. I guess I wanted to make a point that art is a really amazing way and there's some incredible artists in this room who are particularly working in social practice, and social practice is an amazing way to create sort of spaces.

If you want an example of a great way to encourage access and a safe space, if you ever want to learn about the importance of listening, please speak to Beth sometimes and research this project. There's lots and lots of projects around Australia that are doing really, really respectful and sensitive and engaging projects.

Thanks, and there absolutely are, in particular the ways in which social-engaged practice is increasingly interfacing with institutional practice at smaller scales. I think it's incredibly important. I can't wait to see that at more of a larger scale.

Before we go to the next question, I'm just looking at the time, I wonder if we can touch on now the next steps around the gender questions that we all started to ... We've all been having ever since a range of very public issues and events in the performing arts and so on. Around International Women's Day this year we put out that statement that I think you may all have seen called Dear Person I've Been Reluctant To Keep Engaging With But I've Had To For Professional Reasons. That was about actually directing something to perpetrators of gender harassment as opposed to the endless stream of advice to people who are being harassed or violent [inaudible 00:46:46] or worse.

Ever since then we've been talking to a bunch of organisations as well as some lawyers about putting together a whistle blower protocol, like a way of being able to make complaints and raise issues but also maintaining anonymity. There have been a number of organisations, there might be some in this room, who have had to go through that process of either receiving anonymous complaint and not actually being able to deal with it and not being able to identify and keep that person safe through a process, or sometimes you aren't able to go through a process because of that anonymity. There are ways in other industries that whistle blowers can maintain anonymity and a process can still be gone through for whatever kind of issue, be it gender harassment or otherwise. Some pro bono lawyers have put together a protocol for us. We've now shared that with a few different organisations and the idea is to refine and develop something that can kind of set the standard and then can sit alongside work that's being done in other art forms including… some of you may have seen the code of conduct that Life Performs Australia, South Australian Film Commission and a few others put together over the last many months. That was released last week, so the idea is to do something all together that can be really useful. I just wanted to update us on that while we're talking about all of this.

A lot of hands went up. No one has actually got the mic at the moment. We will give it to Miranda. Oh sorry, we have got a mic, have we? Zoe has got it. Someone else has it. Miranda

is going to raise her hand. Miranda is from the Countess, the Countess Report, which I recommend you look up. She's got stereo now. This is good.

Yeah, what I wanted to mention is around the Countess Report, but also around education, which I think Abdul spoke really nicely about in terms of his own experience within education. Also, when we're talking about whistle blowing, for example, that's quite a late step in actually changing a culture. That does not automatically condone gendered harassment in the arts, and also harassment based on many other grounds as well. Education, I think, links back to what Abdul was talking about, but also as some ways that need to go alongside policies around whistle blowing too, I believe, so like, political pedagogy. Really critical pedagogy, pedagogy that doesn't necessarily just sanction the curriculum, stuff that's being taught, I think is really, really important and can be a great resource for educators and for anyone working in the arts to think about how we can share knowledge. That will hopefully try and instill these values amongst younger people.
Yeah, absolutely, and thank you. I wasn't very clear about where the protocol sits in, so yeah, whistle blower is way late, but the idea is to plug in to the other national work that's being done, so the code of practice for organisations and a code of conduct for people. This is part of a national thing, so yeah, if we were relying just on that that would be ... As you said, that would just be absurd.

The next time you're at an exhibition opening, have a look around. See how many black and brown faces there are and ask yourself why.

I was just thinking about that question on your topic of how to address inequality and everyone seems to have very similar concerns in their own areas, but I don't know ... I've been speaking with [inaudible 00:50:42], which is my background, but I'm also kind of working on the other side in local government as well. I was thinking about your statement up the back, about not about us without us. I think maybe assessment panels where whatever the organisations are with government or your arts, I think it's really important maybe to have representation there, so even as artists when you're going through applying for applications maybe you could also contact those people and say, "Hey, do you have an arts person on your assessment panel? Do you have someone with a background in disability?," and if not, just recommend people. I think without dobbing anyone in, I have been quite surprised at the lack of diversity on different panels, and not because of deliberate mismanagement, but perhaps just convenience. Just get active. If you can do it, get in touch with both organisations and put your hand up for it.

Abdul, we're running out of time. What are some ... I mean, a lot of this comes down to understanding privilege, understanding the decisions that we're a part of, but also in all the different ways that we have in all the different means that we have to be advocates, to be making our expectations clear. What's one of the most important things I guess that [inaudible 00:52:26] needs to hear right now?

I think it's really broad. I don't know if it's one of the most important things, but it's just what I'm thinking right now. It's that as artists, and maybe I'm talking specifically to the artists in the room, we are sole traders in the most volatile industry on the planet. It's difficult and I know it's difficult. People have talked about my trajectory, but like Buzz Lightyear says in Toy Story, I'm just [inaudible 00:52:56]. I think there is no defined pathway, you know what I mean? It's a wobbly, wobbly path and we're all going to mess up, but try moving forward. I don't know.

Yes, it's a wobbly path. I guess, yeah, ask. Ask people, ask people who don't look and sound like you when you're in a position of leadership. You can open and share that when you're somewhere where you can see that others are not represented there. I mean, these are just personal commitments that we need to make to a future that we all build together, and I like this idea of a wobbly future because, like you said, it's a different context. There aren't single trajectories to a place that looks the same. There is the way what you've put it, the specificity and the complexity. Thank you for sharing what you view.

Am I supposed to respond?

Tell us about your specificity and your complexity. No, it's just that's really resonating with me because it's incredibly important and epic, you know? How do we drive that through the way that we make decisions and just live in the world?

And to sort of bring it back to my original point I guess, with the Senator who spoke yesterday and he's talking about ... Maybe I'm going off topic, but he thought ...

Session 5: How to advocate with Michaela Boland and Nicholas Pickard

SPEAKER TWO: … been to a national gallery once or twice but has no idea personally of like the wider ecology of the arts or what's going on in it. It appears to be in Australian politics that we get these people who inherit this portfolio and the arts portfolio is the thing that they get sandwiched with.

The Minister that we had throughout that period he came from rock and roll and he never needed any handout ever and made a lot of money from it and was really successful, had an international career. He thought he knew how it worked and he was not responsive and I think Simon Crean actually who replaced him or came a little later he was one of the most effective – he finally got that Arts policy up and he was just a veteran politician who approached it like a job and I think that's actually what we want in the Arts is someone who comes to it as, "This is my responsibility. This is my job. I'll listen to everybody and I'll process it professionally."

Brandis was another who really wanted – and Harwin, Don Harwin in New South Wales they really wanted the Arts portfolio because they thought they had an idea about it and then their biases came out.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Can you tell us what you think the attraction is?

SPEAKER ONE: To some Ministers it's very attractive because it's parties and it's being seen with fancy people.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: (Laughter).

SPEAKER ONE: Totally, but that's actually – that's true. They love to be seen around interesting people because they're not.

SPEAKER TWO: Probably. On the flip side of that one of the most effective Arts campaigning devices that I've seen is in the UK and it came out of the Conservative cuts to the Arts when they got into power about 10 years ago, maybe 12 years ago, and Chapters started to pop up around the country called What's Next because they wanted to mobilise the sector and they wanted to start having conversations not just with themselves but with other industries.

I used to go to this Chapter that was South Bank. It had all of the resident companies in South Bank from, you know, the South Bank Centre to the Old Vic to the Young Vic but also local artists, even major arts organisations and they would come together every Wednesday morning at 8 am. They'd grab a coffee, they'd have a guest speaker come in. They'd talk about major issues facing the sector but then start talking about something else, Brexit.

You know, something might have happened the week before about major changes to adult social care and they would start talking about that because it was about the Arts engaging with other industries and getting themselves outside of an echo chamber so they knew what was going on in their community and knew what was going on in government and it helped to form the way that they were talking to government and talking to each other.

SPEAKER THREE: I think that's so important, those conversations around that which connect up your point and also to Dan's as well about to what extent do we participate in a certain structure and to what extent do we try and create something new.

That's about expanding the scope of our conversations and just getting a sense of, you know, what others are doing, others in other fields, other industries. That started as a few Chapters and they've developed all sorts of things.

SPEAKER ONE: They've got Chapters now up and down the country from Scotland to Northern Ireland. They come together every year for what's the next conference and they're quite powerful with a very clear channel of communication from the broad brush strokes of that sector right through to government and other industries.

SPEAKER THREE: More questions, Katie has her hand up and then the person in the yellow. I'm sorry for you, it's always the people who are like the furthest from where you happen to be standing with the mike.

KATIE: I guess my sort of question is around politicians who understand art and like culture and like national identity and so the current Arts Minister is far too, you know, pour all this money into creating another monument to Captain Cook. As a community we don't necessarily feel like that is politically representing our position but it's still a conservative understanding of like how they want to spend the Arts budget. How we break through that to talk to them I guess about the politics of what we see as arts and culture because I feel like it's fallacy to think that conservative governments don't care about art, they do but they care about art that maybe the broader art sector doesn't care about.

SPEAKER TWO: I don't know how to answer that. It was unbelievable that that was included in the budget and I don't know how you protest that. Maybe you write a letter,

maybe you write a letter to the Arts Minister but I don't know how you make a stronger protest than that, I don't know.

SPEAKER ONE: Probably the most powerful thing that we haven't really touched on is the work of artists in protests and commenting on what's going on. That's a really powerful tool as well and I think that that sort of stuff provides really good inspiration to what you want to create. I think it's sort of like an artistic conversation.

SPEAKER THREE: Just on that, something that we see as being quite important for our plans for the next few years is to think about how we amplify the voice of the artist into the national conversation. Sometimes that's about, you know, artists accessing the media arts organisations, accessing these, but sometimes it's also about that culture that we don't quite have in Australia where people approach artists for comment about things that aren't just arts issues, artists who are known for making work about something in particular.

SPEAKER TWO: Ben Quilty for example I suppose.

SPEAKER THREE: Yes. We could probably name on one hand the artists who are regularly approached. Has anyone ever been approached by media whether it's local or otherwise about –

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

SPEAKER THREE: Yes, and about arts issue. Then we'll go to the person in the yellow putting her hand up but there's also someone we can't quite see sort of waving at me.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: The point about reporting on artists doing work and before I make the point I want to –

SPEAKER THREE: I'm just going to interrupt because my question has been approached for comment. If it's a new question we will go to the person in the yellow shirt because he was first. Mr Yellow Shirt?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I've been wondering about since the campaign was brought up and the lobbying of friends and families that were in that campaign that was successful not because straight people were ready to bottle it up, it was successful because we were all emailing our friends and family why that was an important issue.

Often, I think a lot of artists share the experience that we still have to explain to friends and family why it's a legitimate job and what's more effective lobbying like we can do every day, lobbying politicians or lobbying friends and family and what's the critical moment to do both or either one.

SPEAKER ONE: I mean it's almost like you're doing your own qualitative research in your messaging, by talking to your friends, family, community about the impressions. It's the sort of the way that you talk to government as well, it's all the same, that for me is the same.

SPEAKER THREE: People often get to conversations with people when they're in a new city they'll ask the people making their coffee or driving a taxi because people in those jobs speak to lots and lots of people, so giving it a go kind of thing, let's talk about a current issue the way that's not the way that my friends would probably start about talking about the echo

chamber and also those of us from family backgrounds who are, you know, just horrified about our career and sexuality choices.

I've had some very instructive conversations with family members that have genuinely inspired the way that I then talk to MPs. It's like oh, I think saying things in a way that has made sense to me for a long time but that wasn't the way to appeal to someone who either is indifferent, doesn't agree with me or is virulently anti what I'm talking about.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: It was a question but I'll lead to it. In my view the reason why he has campaigned and was so successful was because it was led by the government and the press, so people followed suit and to me that is inevitably the case. People can set the agenda. Whether it's the community at large or small groups they can set an agenda. They can try and start a conversation but ultimately it is the people up the top who lead the conversation and in any country it is the government and it is the press. The press has to do its job too.

SPEAKER ONE: Can I say something on that? There was so much work that happened prior to government actually taking on that campaign for them to actually approve it. There was just so much work from human rights advice on servicing Victoria through to gay rights in Sydney working together, fund raising, working with business. Lobbying went on for years before that actually happened, enforce that change.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: It was very organised.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: And you're right but this also connects to then something else that you mentioned about stories for the press, why does the press not cover artist stories. Social media platforms at the moment are absolutely going viral on the Clive Palmer billboards and whoever I talk to, and I'm seeing them everywhere, some artist is carrying out an intervention on the Clive Palmer Make Australia Great billboards.

SPEAKER THREE: What are they doing? I haven't seen them.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: They're incredible. They're all over social media. I haven't seen one single press reporting on this. Actually one internet press, I don't remember what it's called, talked about vandalising so, you know, it's how the press – I don't mean to blame you and I'm not even angry, this is a fact. It's the language that you use, language shapes people's thinking from the government to the press.

Have a look at Clive Palmer's billboards from Make Australia Great to Make Australia Grate, you know, a parmesan grater, to put Australia first, to put profits first. These are the kinds of interventions but everywhere.

SPEAKER THREE: A really a superb example of that in Australia for those of us who are old enough to remember was the 1980s BUGA-UP campaign which was a very well organised – I wish I'd known some of these artists who vandalised billboards all over Australia that advertised tobacco. It got to the point where you just could not expect to put up a tobacco ad anywhere in Australia without expecting an artistic response within a day.

SPEAKER ONE: I don't know whether it had any effect or not but I loved the Brandis in Art campaign.

SPEAKER THREE: The Art of Brandis.

SPEAKER TWO: Yes, the Art of Brandis. I just loved it, his face on everything. It was just hilarious.

SPEAKER THREE: All right, some more questions for these guys and then I'm going to ask them to just give us a couple of top tips to leave us with. Who has got a question? There is one from Shannon over there also once again in the opposite end to where we are. We're passing the parcel.

SPEAKER ONE: I'll give you a top tip now. If you're going to invite MPs to things just check out the sitting calendar. It's easy to Google, Parliament House aph sitting calendar. You'll know whether they're going to be around or not.

SPEAKER THREE: That is a very good point, the sitting calendar and also have a look at This Week in Parliament which lists what is being discussed by both Houses every day which is why I mentioned the unexplained wealth legislation that I haven't had a second to look up since I mentioned it. Shannon?

SPEAKER TWO: Can I just add though, if you've got an event on I don't think it hurts to send them an invitation anyway even if they can't come because it's about initiating a conversation with them. It's like a little pamphlet landing in their inbox so they know what you're doing. They can't come for the first three sitting weeks, the fourth one it's not a sitting week and they've got a narrative of you actually emailing them.

SPEAKER ONE: True. This is maybe branching off from things about being approached by media but as some individual artists and arts organisations do become more political and start to campaign on issues etc. and participate in this debate, especially on issues of race etc., they're going to be quite susceptible to attacks by certain parts of the press and I don't think a lot of artists are prepared for what that experience is like.

There are people in this room who have faced that fire and still kind of battle through it but I wonder about advice in terms of facing those often really personal – they put you physically at risk often because of how they focus the public that read certain press and I think it's probably worth hearing a little bit whether there's any advice for individuals who may face that unexpectedly.

SPEAKER THREE: The question was there are organisations and also artists who will be attacked in the media and we're thinking of an example in Melbourne recently where the tabloid paper attacked Seventh Gallery. What did they do? Shannon, take us through that.

SPEAKER ONE: So I guess they hosted an issue that was colonisation. They had a panel of participants who had been strident on issues of this in different formats and they were kind of questioned on this. I guess I've experienced this in different ways over time. When I was growing up in Queensland an artist was pursued by the Courier Mail because they were performatised and they were hounded by that paper into a nervous wreck. We grew up kind of in fear of attracting that attention so I think it's just something to be familiar with.

Then there's the social media stuff. I find that whole thing completely depressing and gradually shutting down each of the platforms. The conversation can be so vicious. I find that really hard.

SPEAKER THREE: What are your thoughts on kind of, you know, the readiness I guess, the response that artists and organisations need to have when they are attacked by the conservative media for basically doing the work, doing the job of the public cultural conversation. We can think of I think any number of columns by Andrew Bolt or people like that, "I'll make a lazy story this week. I'll just read the latest funding announcement, certain funding body and then I'll make a whole story.", just laughing at the names of the projects.

You may have seen either yesterday or the day before, I can't remember, it was for humanities or one of the academic bodies put out a statement in response to one of these articles where academics are laughed at purely for hosting conferences that touch on issues of race, gender, sexuality etc.

SPEAKER TWO: I suppose when applying for funding and putting yourself out there you need to run whatever those documents are that you're submitting or whatever the idea is have somebody you trust or your representative organisation, run it by somebody but then be aware that you are playing in a public forum and that we can't control what happens after it's out of your hands.

I'm not saying it's okay, I'm not defending it but once you do submit something into a public arena or you're applying for public funding you're part of a wider conversation that you can't control any more. I know it's very personal but the whole thing about playing in the public is that you have to steel yourself against whatever that reaction might be.

SPEAKER THREE: When you say run it by them you mean in terms of like how you would then respond.

SPEAKER TWO: Have somebody else interrogate it and say I'm submitting this, how could it blow back in my face, what should I be prepared for, somebody with some rigour or some distance and they might say well, you know, here's the thing, you're suggesting rolling 10,000 rolls of toilet paper up in a configuration and maybe you would get a headline, shit storm, whatever. How do you feel about that? How would you feel about that? If you've prepared yourself and worked through some of those scenarios then you'll be a little bit stronger but that is what the public forum – I'm not saying it's okay but that's what it is.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Just following up on the previous comment I think one of the best pieces of advice, practical pieces of advice we got given as a PVI collective post making a workable terrorist training school, I think 2003 or whatever it was, was actually from the Australia Council and their ER department which basically said you need to write a list of the questions that you dread the most, that you kind of feel like oh, my God, this would really floor me and you answer them so you have it down. The other tip they gave us was to never feel as though you have to respond straightaway, that you can put the phone down on a member of the press and say, "I'm going to think on that and get back to you.", and it's your choice to be put in that situation where you are feeling whatever. They were really handy tips.

SPEAKER THREE: That's really great. Thank you.

SPEAKER TWO: I suppose it's part of letting something you've created go out into the world that you'll have some wonderful feedback ultimately but there's also some stuff that you might not want but if you have anticipated it it will be easier to deal with.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: There's a question here somewhere but it's a bit of a comment. Just moving on from the previous session where

we were addressing inequity and probably what I was talking about yesterday about a general sense of apathy, so I guess the question is in terms of particularly the notion of first nations and that how do you actually advocate when people don't really care or there's a perception of people don't really care.

Why I'm actually thinking about that, and all due respect to the panel, there's another big campaign, constitutional recognition, treaty of sovereignty. We don't really hear about that.

I also heard about the Brandis issue. That wasn't a cut, that was just a reallocation from Australian Council within the portfolio. The same year in the parliamentary budget statement there was a 33.8 million dollar cut. The brunt of that was felt by the indigenous programs that is still being felt today. Within that area we had indigenous culture support and indigenous languages program, so tuned into one the new indigenous language there were cuts, real cuts out of the Arts budget that we're still feeling the ramifications today and it was in the public domain.

Everybody was worried about the Brandis redirection, it wasn't a cut. A lot of organisations benefited from it, a lot of Aboriginal – I don't support it. I think it's set up a false economy that actually next year once it goes through the process we're going to actually hear it and feel some real serious things coming out of it but there are other things happening, particularly in first nations, so how do you advocate and call on champion supporters when people have the perception no-one really gives a fuck or is the message stiff shit.

SPEAKER TWO: I think deadline can help. It creates urgency. The Brandis cuts were coming. There was Black Friday, so time lines. The problem with reconciliation – what's the deadline. Sometimes you have to create those deadlines whatever they might be but media is a daily beast or increasingly a minute by minute but deadlines create urgency. Then that prioritises that story over the next one which has a deadline for tomorrow or the next day.

SPEAKER THREE: One of the issues around timing and deadline last year was of course that all the work and the focus of the Uluru Statement from the Heart which had a particular, strong and very clear time line the attention was then eclipsed by the major quality vote and the yes campaign through absolutely no fault of the people who were campaigning for that. I had so many conversations, I'm sure so did Peta, at that time. This work had been going for years and years. This was the time line. That was the deadline and it then it's that kind of thing where you suddenly sit back and think is Australia really that small, has the media kind of constrained to the point where we only have one national conversation of some kind of cultural thing. How do we make sure that conversations like this don't stay in a place of apathy when it comes to political decision makers.

SPEAKER TWO: When I referred to that What's Next program in the UK what that is essentially doing is planting long term seeds so that there is a continuing conversation that's happening, there's a continuing engagement so that people, hopefully, do give a shit. Peta's point, when the cuts came through there was 80 million straight out was cut from the Australian Council, then there was about 100 between each of the departments for catalyst and then there were those programs around languages and there was also an interactive games fund that was cut. It was a cut that went to supporting local arts champions to complement still existing local sports champion program. There was a whole host of cuts

that happened that kind of captured the imagination within the sort of bandwidth of the media was the Australia Council.

SPEAKER TWO: I think that it also played into Brandis bookshelves, it continued that narrative of him being pompous and out of touch. The story in it from a mainstream point of view is not about all these arts companies about to lose funding it was this out of touch Minister making a decision based on what and now he's got, you know, lots of people really cranky. Again it's self interest when it plays into establish narrative. Artists suffering is not a story.
It's true. In the last couple of weeks in New South Wales there's been a really devastating funding round by Create New South Wales resulting in 2.7% of applicants being funded. I've been trying to get this story over the line with the television news guys and they kind of go, "oh". I go I've got all these great examples, I've got pictures for you. It's not a story that they think that mainstream will have sympathy for.

I need to come up with a more interesting compelling way to frame it, so I reframed it as arts funding round disastrous, disarray, Create New South Wales, and that means that the performing companies can't tour in New South Wales. Drought affected communities that could benefit from community building, mental health outreach and whatever right now, economic stimulants, aren't going to get it because Create New South Wales is in a mess. That's how I can kind of get that story to play outside of just the arts is by having a regional rural community impact story.

SPEAKER ONE: For what it's worth the Uluru statement debate I feel like is getting really good coverage. The ABC, I think Garma broadcasting live, Patricia Karvelis was grilling some Minister two days ago about why Turnbull would keep turning down the Uluru statement.

SPEAKER THREE: That's a great example of, you know, it will be an election issue because we will make it one and it's one that we all have to, you know, I think absolutely be behind and make sure that we're having a conversation informally but that we're also talking to MPs, to decision makers.

It is time to wrap up. I want to thank you both so much. This again is the kind of conversation that we could have a good, good long time but it's just so important to hear about those kinds of practicalities of how we work the particular existing system. To hear Mikala talk about how – Mikala herself has got to also go through the process of pitching as news. The art is not just about art, access to a journalist, it's about what constitutes news. Nick, thank you also.

Session 6: Future/Forward Actions with Esther Anatolitis and Penelope Benton

Esther: It has been so heartening to just hear so many important connections and conversations happening between everyone.

We're a national organisation which means that now the members are everywhere and the difficulty of getting ourselves at the one place at the one time is just, you know, extreme.

I want to thank again those who have come from far away, the State governments of every State for contributing in the form of travel subsidies. I just don't know how so many artists could have got here if it wasn't for those.

Thanks again to the Copyright Agencies who have been the major funder of this. There's no way we could have done this without them and of course the NGA yesterday for hosting us and Parliament House.

Penelope: And a couple of private donors.

Esther: There were also a couple of private donors who made it possible for artists to get here who would not otherwise have which is just amazing.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: The billets, thank you.

Esther: Who billeted an artist or who stayed in a billeted place, thank you and thank you and thank you. This goes to the question of Dan and others around how we work the system and how we kind of contradict it and how do we overcome it.

Penelope: Since you mentioned that Esther I do want to mention that Parliament House do have feedback forms on their website.

Esther: Very valuable information.

Penelope: I strongly recommend that we all fill in one of those and comment on the food, particularly for vegetarians, the access, lack of access I should say, sorry, and not just for Daniel but everybody trying to get in and out of here and even walk down the hallway has been so annoying.

Esther: The general, I guess, approach of staff employed in security when we are here, and particularly when artists are here, there should be a welcome which is about the discussion, the contribution that we are making to big public conversations and possibly that's just people briefing each other better within the organisation but absolutely the feedback is going to be really, really super valuable.

I want to thank Justine van Mourik for taking us through what art means. Is Justine in the room? There she is, how did I miss that gorgeous big hair? Thank you to Justine. I want to thank Justine again also for something that I wish we could all have done together but she took me on a tour on the store when I was here last and to see the work of artists across so many different media down there was just extraordinary.

So much of what we wanted to do in these couple of days was to get a sense of negotiating our next work, negotiating the partnerships and the various relationships that make the code of practice the standard so that we're going into negotiations, before negotiations, we are fostering a contemporary art sector that's ambitious and fair.

We only got to have a bit of a conversation about the code and Penelope took us through some key sections of it and possibly people still have some more questions or things you'd like to raise about the code.

Penelope: We might just throw it open to the floor. I know lots of people were keen to talk about the code, so let's do that now.

Esther: Great. Hello, Alex.

ALEX: I just wanted to say it's been really interesting coming here to this seminar. I didn't know what to expect to come today to this conference. It seems really obvious to me that NAVA has a really big job ahead of it and what's become really obvious is that the sector is really broad and not unified, and perhaps it doesn't have to be unified, and so the idea of a code of practice is going to be a very difficult thing for you guys to address from our perspective. I guess I'm talking about independent art spaces. I guess we are kind of seeing you guys as a bit of a union which is perhaps unusual in the art sector and will be unusual for other organisations in the art sector. Anyway, I guess we'll continue the discussion.

Esther: Yes, thank you. Of course, we're a union. On the thing about how difficult it's going to be, yes, and I was grateful that Penelope gave that outline yesterday about the years of work that went into developing it in the first place and then every few years but not frequently enough, you know, the revision of it.

Penelope: Well, not really. It was just sort of edited and tweaked a little bit in a bit of a clumsy way.

Esther: That's why I want to do it properly. When we look at the list of academic, legal and other organisations, you know, tax experts, obviously indigenous leaders in terms of protocol and others who worked on the original one it is a really big job.

What you say about unity I think is really worth having a good, long think about and we certainly will be because it's like do we need to be, you know, politically or ideologically unified in order to come up with standards that are ambitious and fair. There's got to be some agreement because they have to work well.

The standards of best practice that are best going to be able to support the way that artists work have also got to be the standards that are best informed by using the galleries, by the institutions who have been doing this for a very long time and who also want the best for artists.

We're not approaching this in this kind of, what's the word, there's a difference between like a consensus on absolutely everything and then the real specifics around the chapters as Penelope outlined about like, you know, what is best practice around competitions, around commissioning works of art in a public space. We get those down, we look at how there is going to be agreement or otherwise on that and then we do something that any good code of practice or policy document should have, we put a review date on it. We actually say that, yeah, we're going to look at this again in x number of years' time. I think that's what I think that we haven't had the chance to do previously.

Penelope: Yes.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I guess I don't want to also imply that there is sameness but I think that is really hard to address but I guess I'm just thinking about how you're kind of, I guess, assessing that over time is a good kind of approach.

In South Australia they just brought in with a grant, a kind of policy that says that any funded organisation or project needs to have kind of anti-bullying, anti-sexual harassment policy within their organisation. I think, I don't know, so far it's very early days with that but I'm not sure how they're going to be monitoring that and whether that's monitored within those independent organisations which can then choose what that means.

It seems like it's a bit opt in or opt out. They'd need a kind of workshop ethical kind of thing but it's not something that you have to attend. I was just thinking in terms of more broadly across the sector how you're working things like access and diverse boards and programming, gender, and things like that that shouldn't be negotiable even if you're an artist with limited capacity, like how do you enforce those things even though it's harder for us in particular ways. Surely there's a kind of attitude or approach as well. I just feel like there's been artists not treated as though they should come first.

Esther: Thank you so much for that. While I'm answering that one there's a question up the back, sorry, Molly.

Penelope: We might need to not answer all the questions because we're going to run out of time. Maybe it's a little bit of us receiving lots of questions and then maybe we'll come back to people at another time.

Esther: All right, that sounds good because we will run out of time, but I will say in response to that in the disability action planning framework which draws on the social model of disability there are four barrier areas that policy needs to address. One of those is attitudinal, the other one is physical. The other one is social. The fourth one I've just forgotten, I think it is about the costs of access.

That has always stayed in my mind from that kind of policy planning because a code of practice – I can't remember if we talked about this yesterday, just a conversation that we've all been having but it's not a set and forget thing and when we talked yesterday about how it used to be the case, it has sometimes been the case that the payment schedule has been sitting there alongside funding applications and it just kind of hasn't, that is contingent upon, but shouldn't be, but is contingent upon the good relationships that NAVA maintains with government bodies across Australia.

Now it shouldn't have to be but Penelope and I have these, you know, lovely meetings once a year and go, hey, do you want to like still be ethical or not. She's like yes, do that. Fantastic, glad I dropped in.

One of the things we've been talking about when we say a policy that's a condition of funding wouldn't it be amazing if it was a condition of funding that all relevant institutions had to have a policy of a payment of artists.

Now that's a policy. That's not saying you must pay artists and it's not saying you must pay artists the NAVA rate but it's saying what's your policy on how you engage with artists, what you offer in return, what's the professional development, the networking, the resources that you have access to, so that it can be a policy for even organisations that don't have any money, which is going to be one of the scaffold steps. What happens when suddenly you have got money and you can afford to pay yourself, are you going to, are you not, are you going to support artists who come in, how does that happen, so all that, all that complexity.

Penelope: Absolutely. Have any of you got mikes?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I've got one. I would like to ask what your thinking is about philanthropy. Can we do anything about philanthropy going to the code of practice?

Penelope: Absolutely. We do have it on our notes that there currently is no chapter on relationships, funding relationships with either funding bodies or philanthropists, so yes we will be doing that.

Esther: Also from our point of view we want to put together a future members fund that welcomes contributions from philanthropists who would support campaign work and to achieve that public visibility.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Esther and Penelope, I just wanted to ask you to make sure that you go and speak to the 80 Plus Aboriginal owned and governed art centres in Australia. They've existed for decades and I know they employ staff and other things now but they are Aboriginal owned and governed arts businesses that are done within their own organisations and with the peak bodies that represent them, a lot of the work and a lot of the things that everybody is talking about here today and they're really effective at doing that. I think that if you can speak to them they're all extremely generous and they can share a lot with everybody that's here.

Esther: Great, thank you. I completely agree. We're so lucky to have Gabrielle, Marie and Sarina and also Pam. For it to be possible for you guys to be here has been great. It's just the beginning.

FRANCIS: I'm Francis. Back in the mid nineties I was the chair of the New South Wales State Management Committee of NAVA and on the board. I understand that those State committees no longer exist. I'm now based in Tasmania and my question is how does NAVA intend to consult on this code of practice with artists in States that do not have representation on the NAVA board and that essentially have no collective direct line to communicate with NAVA?

Esther: That is a very good question and of course the board of NAVA although they're members from many States they are not the sole direct line. Boards of course have got to govern for the whole organisation and we have members all around Australia including organisation members all around Australia, but our role has to be to promote, protect the interests of contemporary artists, visual artists whether they are members or not.

It has been fantastic because of the growth in our membership in the last little while and something that NAVA is very grateful for and I personally am very grateful for the support of members because it means that those contributions to NAVA's ongoing operations mean that I can get around to every State and do that as regularly as possible.

The work around the code is going to be well structured with some very clear opportunities that everyone will know about in each State so that we're hearing it from everyone because it couldn't work otherwise, we could not work otherwise.

Penelope: We do have one more person with a microphone and then we'll open up a thing on the website for people to send us their comments.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you. My question is just with regard to public art. I understand that's one of the huge new chapters and I just wanted to ask because it's an area that I specialise in, temporary public art and whether that will be part of it just because my experience is that it's something that really does need a lot more, I guess, clarity for the people who are actually on the other side participating, not just for the artists but for the people who are actually wanting to have a public art exhibition because they're not necessarily arts people.

I rely on you guys for those standards to actually communicate them to non-arts people, so to have something tighter around that –

Penelope: Totally, so useful for people like myself and I'm not going to go into detail right now because we're out of time but yes, yes, yes, yes.

Esther: So much yes. We've got as well as you at least two other experts in exactly that field in this room and many, many others who we'll be chatting with.

We're so almost out of time. We've really only got times for some thank yous. I want to say some thank yous. I just want to get a sense about the key things for us to be advocating. I want to with all my heart thank Polly Morrison, Laura Pike, Claudia, (inaudible), Penelope Benson.

Penelope: And Esther Anatolitis.

Esther: I am so deeply impressed with the people that I work with. I go to work every day and am so honoured to work with such ethical people, people of rigour and smarts, people who like all of you not only put the arts and creative practice first but wear their politics in ways that I deeply admire.

We talk about the NAVA office being like a cross between an arts organisation, a newsroom and a campaign headquarters, but also talk about querying the space in which we work and thinking about identity and what we identify with and what we are complicit in or what we implicitly are asked to identify with and we engage with certain organisations.

We've touched on this a little bit today but for the personal and political reasons is exceptionally important to us at NAVA and that's why I'm so proud to work with such outstanding people, so thank you all very, very much.

I want to thank all of you because we wanted to get together for all sorts of reasons and we wanted to really for a lot of the reasons we were just talking about in this session, actually this previous one, mobilising, galvanising, the times that we need to rely on each other because we're working on something that is difficult and challenging or is deeply inspiring, the time spent when we need to because some kind of emergency has happened, we need to mobilise fast or the times when we want to reset and recapture a national agenda that is for the arts. There are going to be many of those times.

Penelope: I have to say, and I'm not alone as the only vegetarian or vegan in the room but having such terrible food has also added to the exhausting nature of sitting in a dark room all day without any air. I'm sure that I'm not the only one zoning in and out.

Esther: What do you need NAVA to do?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

Esther: Thank you for saying that. I'm going to have a lovely, friendly conversation with the NT government really, really soon because we go on the phone and like, you know, strong armed every State government in Australia to offer travel subsidies and unfortunately Arts NT were not able to so we worked with private donors and others to make sure that we could find some money to support artists from the NT.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Did you get money from Arts NT?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

Esther: Exactly, very expensive so big respect and thanks to you.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Please keep your strong, loud advocacy for artists and we'll keep behind you and in front and beside you but just keep it going, keep the momentum going because we need it.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: We need NAVA.

Penelope: And we need you.

Esther: We need you. This is a team sport. Shout it out, shout it out.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I want to make sure that there's more incentive (inaudible).

Esther: Yes, 100%, making sure there is authentic commitment to supporting first nation artists in the code, not only that but through the passionate commitment of our two first nations board members we are looking at much bigger, longer term things around – there's a lot of conversations, individual artists about how there aren't national bodies for first nations visual artists. We want to see what we can possibly do to support, push that conversation. There are so many and there are more conversations, more than we're going to learn by talking to art centres and talking to others as well. That is absolutely deeply important to us and is a commitment of course.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: How many members are we?

Penelope: We have a network of 20,000, well actually just over 20,000. Just over 4,000 of those are paying financial members which is double what it was when I started at NAVA three and a half years ago.

Esther: NAVA has more members now than at any other time in its history. Thank you.

Penelope: Thank you.

Esther: Thank you. That's probably a lovely place to wrap up.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Can I add one thing?

Esther: Yes.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Remember that next year is going to be a Federal election year.

Esther: It is on my calendar.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: We need to also lobby Opposition that may become the government.

Esther: Absolutely. Thank you for mentioning that.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Government members, the Opposition.

Esther: I want to show you – I don't know how much people can see my phone from all the way down there –

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Not really.

Esther: Probably not. This is tomorrow's schedule, back to back meetings with MPs from all major parties and it's in our strategic plan that we will spend a minimum of two separate weeks per year in Canberra doing just that because it's a long game so it's about that cultural change but it's also about the auspicious event of next year.

We actually had on our whiteboard just recently because obviously the bi-elections played out slightly differently and we would have been having some very different conversations and we had a big question on our whiteboard what if the Federal election was called during Future/Forward and how would we just shift the whole program, have a very different kind of conversation.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Can we get the code, think about the way it's designed not just in a useful way.

Esther: Wouldn't that be good.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: And that conversation to be with artists and designers.

Esther: Can we have the code well designed and in a more useful format.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: The button is already great. That was a good change.

Penelope: I've had lots of conversations with artists in the black program over the last couple of years about also pulling out some one pages of the types of things that people need quickly. There also could be an infographics. Pages of words it's so intense even when you are educated in English but if you aren't then it's impossible to navigate, impossible.

Esther: Totally.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: It's really useful getting everyone together (inaudible) facilitates bringing these groups together maybe more strategically, I don't know if that's feasible or not. (Inaudible) Maybe we should do it annually.

Penelope: What would be probably helpful for that is to get some testimonials from people as to how this and why this was so important for us to be able to get funding for it so that it doesn't cost you $1000 to get here.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Also can we like influence the agenda of what we talk about.

Penelope: Yes.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Can I just say in relationship to creative industries, the arts, and how NAVA sits within that. Certainly in a Victorian context it's a really big issue because Arts Victoria has disappeared and now it's Create Victoria and what does that mean for NAVA and for us?

Esther: For those who didn't get to hear the question it's really interesting, arts in our scope in the context of broader creative industries because in Victoria that's where the arts policy framework has gone. Interestingly of course now there is an election coming up this year. The Opposition have no commitment to a creative industries framework and it's going to be fascinating to see if they would foist that disruption on everyone of actually undoing that work. It can be a very interesting time for Victoria.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Just think about who's not in the room.

Penelope: Yes.

Esther: Thank you. Thanks, Dan. I have not had a second to have a good look at the social media feed but we wanted to live stream so for those who weren't able to get here, weren't able to grab one of those subsidies, the entire program has been available online for free. The streaming was of course sessions individually and so if you're on the stream now hi, thanks for persevering with us, you didn't have to go through the passes, the meals and so on. You can view these back as well.

Penelope: I also wanted to make a comment on the live streaming. This has not been delivered in the way that we intended. If we'd had funding we would have been able to play with some way more interactive ways for people to participate who aren't in the room. We will definitely be trying to do that again next time.

Esther: There's just so much technology we can use. It's a big country.