

## FOI

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 16 January 2025 1:41 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Announcement Event - Ministerial Brief/Invite  
**Attachments:** Briefing for MO - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Announcement 7 Feb 2025.docx

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

As discussed yesterday, sending you this event brief for Minister's office in lieu of s22(1)(a)(ii) ongoing leave. We would like to invite the Minister to attend the Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Media Briefing and speak at Venice Future Fund Launch.

We are happy to correspond to any requests that MO may have concerning the event.

Kindly note, the names of the Artistic Team will be disclosed by 4 February, under embargo, once their formal engagement is complete.

Happy to discuss,

s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

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Office of the CEO

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# Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Announcement

**Event Date:** Friday 7 February 2025

## Event Overview

<b>To</b>	The Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for the Arts		
<b>From</b>	Creative Australia		
<b>Event</b>	<b>Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Media Briefing and Venice Future Fund Launch</b>		
<b>Purpose</b>	Media briefing on the announcement of the 2026 artistic team and launch of the Venice Future Fund		
<b>Host/s</b>	Adrian Collette on behalf of Creative Australia		
<b>Time/date</b>	<b>Media Briefing:</b> 10:30 am – 11:30 am AEDT, Friday 7 February 2025 <b>Venice Future Fund and Ambassador Lunch:</b> 13:00 – 15:30 AEDT, 7 February 2025		
<b>Location</b>	Media Briefing: <b>Parramatta Artist Studios – Granville (TBD)</b> 4 Bridge St, Granville NSW 2142  Venice Future Fund and Ambassadors Lunch: <b>Osteria di Rosso &amp; Rosso</b> 158 Enmore Rd, Enmore NSW 2042		
<b>CREATIVE AUSTRALIA KEY CONTACTS</b>	Project Director	s22(1)(a)(ii)	s22(1)(a)(ii) <a href="http://creative.gov.au">creative.gov.au</a>
	Government Relations	s22(1)(a)(ii)	s22(1)(a)(ii) <a href="http://creative.gov.au">creative.gov.au</a>
	Media Manager	s22(1)(a)(ii)	s22(1)(a)(ii) <a href="http://creative.gov.au">creative.gov.au</a>
	Ambassador Contact	s22(1)(a)(ii)	s22(1)(a)(ii) <a href="http://creative.gov.au">creative.gov.au</a>
<b>Background</b>	This event officially launches the Australia at Venice project for 2026. Australia has participated in the Venice Biennale since 1954. The artist selected for the Venice Biennale 2026 is the 43 <sup>rd</sup> artist to present in the Australia Pavilion in the category of National Participation. <b>The details</b>		



<p><b>Speakers</b></p> <p><b>Format</b></p>	<p><b>of the exhibition and the installation components will not be shared to media.</b></p> <p>The Venice Future Fund will also be officially launched by Creative Australia.</p> <p><b>Media Briefing:</b> Creative Australia Chief Executive Officer, Adrian Collette 2026 Artistic Team</p> <p><b>Venice Future Fund Lunch:</b> The Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for the Arts and Robert Morgan, Chair of Venice Ambassador,</p> <p><b>Media Briefing:</b> Scattered informal seating with an in-conversation between appointed artist and curator to a group of invited media representatives (20 pax).</p> <p><b>Venice Future Fund Lunch:</b> Long table seated lunch with key stakeholders and appointed Ambassadors (24 pax).</p>
<p><b>Key Messages</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australia has participated in the Venice Biennale since 1954, with 2026 marking the 26<sup>th</sup> edition.</li> <li>• The artist selected is the 43<sup>rd</sup> Artist to exhibit in the Australia Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2026.</li> <li>• Creative Australia is proud to be the commissioner of the Project and the producer of the exhibition in the Australia Pavilion working closely with the artistic team in the coming 16 months ahead of the opening in April 2026</li> </ul>

**Media Briefing Running Order**

Time	Activity	Who
9:00 am	Project team arrive and commence bump in	s22(1)(a)(ii)
9:30 am	Communications team arrive	s22(1)(a)(ii)
9:45 am	<b>Artistic team, Adrian Collette and the Minister (TBD) arrive</b>	
9:50 am	Media arrive	
10:00 am	<b>Media Briefing commences</b>	
10:00 am	<b>Adrian Collette:</b> Acknowledgement of Country, welcomes media and special guests, overview of the project and the Venice Future Fund	Adrian Collette (potential)

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Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Announcement



	Introduces artistic team	Welcome to Country by Darug Elder)
10:05 am	<b>Artistic team:</b> Talk about their individual practice and what this opportunity means to them	Artistic Team
10:20 am	s22(1)(a)(ii) Closing remarks and opens floor for questions to the artistic team	s22(1)(a)(ii)
10:40 am	s22(1)(a)(ii) Signals conclusion of media briefing and invites 1-1 conversations with the team as well as photography	s22(1)(a)(ii)
11:00 am	Photography with key media	Artistic team
11:30 am	Event concludes	
11:45 am	<b>Artistic team and Creative Australia team depart</b>	

VFF Lunch Running Order

Time	Activity	Who
11:30 am	Seating arrangement final confirmation	s22(1)(a)(ii)
12:40 pm	Guests arrive, are greeted and are given an aperitivo downstairs	s22(1)(a)(ii)
1:00 pm	All guests seated for lunch	s22(1)(a)(ii)
1:15 pm	Robert Morgan (2 mins) Tony Burke MP (3 mins)	
2:30 pm	Artist and curator remarks over coffee (2 mins) s47F	
3:15 pm	<b>Event concludes and all guests depart</b>	

Creative Australia related VIPs to acknowledge in speech:

- **Artist and Curator**
- The future visioning of the s47F and the championing of s47F who secured and drove the rebuilding of the Australia Pavilion in Venice's Giardini, which was announced by Minister Burke in 2013 and opened in 2015.
- Philanthropic leaders including s47F who have all championed and



Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Announcement



generously contributed to Australia's participation at Venice, making personal commitments to Australian artistry engaging on the world stage.

- **Robert Morgan** the Chair of the Australia Council Board of Creative Australia
- s47F the Chair of the Venice Ambassadors
- s47F is joined and supported by national Ambassadors x, x, x, x and x (TBC). We thank the Ambassadors for their generous support of the 2026 exhibition.

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FOI

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Friday, 17 January 2025 10:05 AM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii) s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Announcement Event - Ministerial Brief/Invite [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** Briefing for MO - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Announcement 7 Feb 2025 - OFTA Comment.docx

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks for providing us with the opportunity to review the Venice Biennale 2026 Announcement Event brief. I have added one comment relating to an inconsistency in the brief, otherwise it looks fine. We are happy for you to send this to the Minister's Office.

We will also share the brief with our Media team so they have visibility of the event.

Regards

s22(1)(a)(ii)

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Happy to discuss,

s22(1)  
(a)(iii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

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Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Announcement



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**Commented [GS1]:** Should his be Chair of Australia Council Board?  
Also later in the brief it shows S47F as Chair of the Venice Ambassadors (see green highlighted below)

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FOI

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 17 January 2025 11:29 AM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Announcement Event - Ministerial Brief/Invite [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks s22(1)(a)(ii)

I've got the inconsistency you pointed out, clarified and we've rectified it.

Thanks for the review.

s22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@arts.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 17 January 2025 10:05 AM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@arts.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team Announcement Event - Ministerial Brief/Invite [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**EXTERNAL EMAIL:** This email originated from outside Creative Australia. Be cautious, particularly with links and attachments.

OFFICIAL

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Happy to discuss,

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Government Relations Officer  
Office of the CEO

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## FOI

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 January 2025 2:39 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii); TODD, Alison  
**Subject:** Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team  
**Attachments:** Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team.docx; Att 1 - Announcement of Australias artistic team for the Venice Biennale (Draft).docx

Dear s22(1)(a)(ii) and s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attached is a Ministerial Brief from Adrian Collette to Minister Burke in relation to the Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team.

Please note that information in this Brief is currently under embargo.

Media release (Att 1) is also in draft form and includes opportunity for the Minister to add a quote if he wants (see highlight).

Appreciate your assistance in forwarding this onto the MO for provision to the Minister. Noting that the announcement is scheduled for 2pm Friday 7 February.

Thank you

s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Government Relations Manager  
Office of the CEO

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Australian Government

Creative  
Australia**FOR INFORMATION**

**To:** The Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for the Arts  
**From:** Adrian Collette, Chief Executive Officer, Creative Australia  
**Subject:** Venice Biennale Artistic Team 2026  
**Date:** Thursday, 30 January 2025

**Summary**

This brief provides information on the decision for the appointed artistic team for the 2026 Venice Biennale. 2026 will be the 26<sup>th</sup> edition of Australia's participation at the Venice Biennale which commenced in 1954.

Creative Australia is the commissioner of the Australia Pavilion and the producer of the Australia at the Venice Biennale project, which incorporates the exhibition within the Pavilion, a suite of professional development programs for Australian creative and cultural workers, and a co-investment program that garners support and advocacy for the project.

**Khaled Sabsabi** has been appointed as the 43<sup>rd</sup> artist to present in the Australia Pavilion in the category of National Participation. **Michael Dagostino** has been appointed as the curator for the artistic team. Both members of the artistic team are from New South Wales.

As set out in our brief sent on Monday 20 January 2025, Creative Australia will publicly announce the 2026 Venice Biennale Artistic Team on **7 February 2025**. We invite you to include a quote in the media release, a draft of which is attached (**Attachment 1**).

*Sensitivities – see point 9.*

**Background**

1. Creative Australia is the commissioner of the Australia Pavilion and the producer of the Australia at the Venice Biennale project, which incorporates the exhibition within the Pavilion, a suite of professional development programs for Australian creative and cultural workers, and a co-investment program that garners support and advocacy for the project.

**Assessment Process**

2. Stage one expression of interest applications opened on 27 August 2024 and closed on 8 October 2024.
3. Creative Australia convened a panel of five industry advisors. The industry advice panel was carefully appointed from a longlist that was Board approved. 51 eligible applications were submitted to the stage one expression of interest.
4. The industry advisors were Mariko Smith (Yuin and Japanese curator), Elaine Chia (arts professional), Wassan Al-Khudhairi (curator of Hawai'i Triennale), Dunja Rmandić (Director

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Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery) and Anthony Gardner (independent curator and academic).

5. An assessment meeting was held on 8 November 2024 to receive the advice of the panel from which **six** shortlisted applicants proceeded to stage two of the assessment process.
6. Stage two applications opened 11 November 2024 and closed 6 December 2024. Industry advisors met with the CEO and Head of Visual Arts at Creative Australia, to provide feedback on stage two submissions.

### Recipients and Shortlistee

7. Here is the appointed artistic team for the 2026 Venice Biennale.

State	Recipient
New South Wales New South Wales	<b>Khaled Sabsabi (artist)</b> <b>Michael Dagostino (curator)</b>

8. Here are the artistic teams that were shortlisted for stage two of the assessment.

State	Shortlistee
Victoria New South Wales	Hayley Millar-Baker (artist) Erin Vink (curator)
Northern Territory Queensland Australian Capital Territory	Dhopiya Yunupinu (artist) Tony Albert (curator) Sally Brand (curator)
Victoria Australian Capital Territory	Jenna Lee (artist) Tina Baum (curator)
Victoria New South Wales	Hong An James Nguyen (artist) Anna Davis (curator)
New South Wales United Kingdom	Mel O'Callaghan (artist) Tamsin Hong (curator)

### Sensitivities

9. Khaled Sabsabi along with other artists withdrew from the Sydney Festival in 2022 in protest at the festival receiving funding from the Israeli Embassy, 'out of solidarity with the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 23/12/2021).



Australian Government



## Announcement

10. Creative Australia will announce the 2026 Venice Biennale Artistic Team on **7 February 2025**.

**Adrian Collette**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Creative Australia**

## Attachments

1. Draft announcement of Australia's Artistic Team for the Venice Biennale (Media Release) – with opportunity to add a quote.



## Media release

# Announcing Australia's artist and curator for the 2026 Venice Biennale

**Under embargo until 2PM AEDT, Friday 7 February 2025**

Creative Australia announces award-winning multidisciplinary artist Khaled Sabsabi and esteemed curator Michael Dagostino as the artistic team to represent Australia at the 61<sup>st</sup> International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia.

Their collaboration will bring an exhibition to the Australia Pavilion that hopes to build empathy and connection between all people.

For more than 35 years, Sabsabi's artistic process involves working across art mediums, geographical borders and with communities in Australian and international contexts. For Sabsabi, creating and exhibiting art has been a way to bring people together in immersive and engaging experiences. Through his work, Sabsabi explores human collectiveness; and questions identity politics and ideology, inviting audiences to do the same.

Michael Dagostino was the founding director of Parramatta Artists' Studios, later Director of Campbelltown Arts Centre, and currently Director of the Chau Chak Wing Museum at the University of Sydney. Dagostino has embedded an intentional artist-driven approach to all of his curatorial and director roles, facilitating access, equity and authorship.

Reflecting on his collaboration with appointed curator Michael Dagostino, Khaled Sabsabi said:

"We acknowledge and recognise First Nations cultural and linguistic diversity that has existed on these lands for thousands of years.

Our collaboration is informed by our common lived experiences and work histories, as migrants and children of migrants. We trust in the culturally diverse voices of Western Sydney and Australia more broadly and the lessons they may offer in negotiations of global futures."

Khaled Sabsabi joins a distinguished group of 42 other Australian artists whose creative contributions have critically engaged with global audiences.

**Federal Minister for the Arts, the Hon Tony Burke MP, said:**

There were a total of six artistic teams shortlisted in the two stage open call process. Creative Australia wishes to acknowledge the talent of shortlisted teams, their efforts signal to the depth of Australia's artistic capacity:

- Dhopiya Yunupinju (1950 – 2024, artist) with Tony Albert and Sally Brand
- Hayley Millar Baker (artist) with Erin Vink
- James Nguyens (artist) with Anna Davis
- Jenna Mayilema Lee (artist) with Tina Baum
- Mel O'Callaghan (artist) with Tamsin Hong

[creative.gov.au](https://www.creative.gov.au)

**Media release**

Creative Australia continues its role as the commissioner for Australia in the category of National Participation.

Creative Australia CEO Adrian Collette AM said:

“We are proud to support this extraordinary team as they prepare to showcase their vision at one of the most prestigious platforms for contemporary art. Khaled Sabsabi’s work, in collaboration with curator Michael Dagostino, reflects the diversity and plurality of Australia’s rich culture, and will spark meaningful conversations with audiences around the world.”

established Australia Council Board Chair Robert Morgan said:

“Khaled Sabsabi and Michael Dagostino continue a proud tradition of showcasing Australia’s exceptional artistic talent at this important global arts event. This unparalleled opportunity is only possible through the generosity of our philanthropic partners who, for decades, have enabled artists to bring their bold and compelling works to this prestigious platform.”

The 2026 artistic team was selected based on the advice of a panel of independent industry advisors including national and international visual arts experts. Creative Australia thanks the industry advisors who took part in this process, including: Anthony Gardner, Dunja Rmandić, Elaine Chia, Mariko Smith and Wassan Al-Khudhairi.

The 61<sup>st</sup> International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia will take place from April – November 2026. In 2026, the main exhibition is being curated by Koyo Kouoh, the executive director and chief curator of Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in Cape Town, South Africa.

More information about Australia at the Venice Biennale is available on our website.

**Media contact:**

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Media Manager, Creative Australia

Mobile: s22(1)(a)(ii)

Email: s22(1)(a)(ii) [creative.gov.au](https://www.creative.gov.au)

**More information****About the Artist: Khaled Sabsabi**

For more than 35 years, Khaled Sabsabi’s artistic process has involved working across mediums and with communities. He sees art as an effective tool to communicate and converse with people, through a familiar language.

Sabsabi was awarded a Creative Australia (previously Australia Council for the Arts) Community and Cultural Development Fellowship in 2001, Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship 2010, 60th Blake Prize 2011, MCG Basil Sellers fellowship 2014, Fishers Ghost Prize 2014, Western Sydney ARTS NSW Fellowship 2015, Sharjah Art Programme Prize 2016, International Council of Museums’ and Heritage Awards, Video Art Prize 2016, University of NSW Annual Alumni Award ‘Art and Culture’ 2019, Copyright Agency Cultural Fund Visual Arts Fellowship 2020,

[creative.gov.au](https://www.creative.gov.au)



**Media release**

Creative Australia 'Annual Visual Arts Award' 2023 and the Mordant Family and Creative Australia American Academy Rome Affiliated Fellowship 2024.

He is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane and has produced more than 65 major mixed media and installation-based works to date, exhibiting in over 90 solo and group art exhibitions in Australia and abroad. Khaled also participated in the 5th Marrakech Biennale, 18th Biennale of Sydney and the 21st Biennale of Sydney, 9th Shanghai Biennale, Sharjah Biennial 11, 1st Yinchuan Biennale, 3rd Kochi Muziris Biennale, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art 2018 and 2024.

### **About the Curator: Michael Dagostino**

Michael Dagostino is the Director of the Chau Chak Wing Museum at the University of Sydney. As a new museum, it unites the university's diverse collections into a multidisciplinary institution dedicated to education and community engagement.

As founding director of Parramatta Artists Studios, he established a key platform for emerging artists. In 2011, he became Director of Campbelltown Arts Centre, where he continued an artist-driven program supporting local, national, and international collaborations. Notable projects include *With Secrecy and Despatch* (2016), co-curated with Tess Allas and David Garneau, exploring colonial impacts through the Appin Massacre, and *Another Day in Paradise* (2017), showcasing Myuran Sukumaran's work co-curated by Ben Quilty.

Michael curated Lisa Reihana's *Cinemanía* (2018) and commissioned the Australian First Nations component of her "*In Pursuit of Venus [Infected]*" for the NZ Pavillion at the Venice Biennale. *A Hope and A Promise* (2021), co-curated by Adam Porter and Matt Cox, surveyed Khaled Sabsabi's 30-year practice held at the Art Gallery of NSW and Campbelltown Arts Centre.

Michael has received Imagine Awards and ICOM awards for institutional excellence. His board memberships include Sydney Dance Company, FBi Radio, Accessible Arts, and the Sydney Writers' Festival, alongside advisory roles for the NSW Government. He remains committed to advancing museums' role in fostering access, equity and authorship.

### **About the Commissioner: Creative Australia**

Creative Australia is the Australian Government's principal arts investment and advisory body.

With artists at the heart of what we do, we invest in creative talent and stimulate the market for Australian stories to be told on a national and international scale, sharing our rich culture with the world. We do this because art and creativity define us, recording what we have been and what we might yet become. As a nation, creativity connects us and benefits us all.

We are proud of Creative Australia's 50-year history of investing in First Nations Arts and Culture and supporting First Nations self-determination. Creative Australia will build on that legacy in 2024 when the inaugural First Nations-led Board will be appointed.

Creative Australia is for the artist.

Creative Australia is for us all.

[creative.gov.au](https://creative.gov.au)



## Australia's participation at the Venice Biennale

Established in 1895, La Biennale di Venezia holds a reputation as one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the world and attracts over 500,000 visitors to its biennial Art exhibition. The history of the La Biennale di Venezia dates back from 1895, when the first Art exhibition was hosted. In the 1930s new festivals were born, including Music, Cinema, and Theatre (the Venice Film Festival in 1932 was the first film festival in history). In 1980 the first Architecture exhibition took place, and in 1999 Dance made its debut at La Biennale.

Australia has participated in the Venice Biennale since 1954 playing a crucial role in presenting Australian talent and ideas to the world. It is one of only 29 countries with a permanent national pavilion in the Giardini (Biennale gardens) and provides an elegant home to showcase the best of Australian art and architecture.

Creative Australia serves as the commissioner and producer of the Australia Pavilion, overseeing its ownership, management and the delivery of its Art exhibitions. It also presents associated activities that currently include sector development programs that provide invaluable international opportunities for visual arts professionals from across the continent.

From 2025, Creative Australia will deliver the production of the Architecture exhibitions to expand its advocacy and development role in supporting Australian creativity.

DRAFT

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## FOI

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 January 2025 5:37 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii); TODD, Alison; s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii); Adrian Collette  
**Subject:** Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team  
**Attachments:** Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team.docx; Att 1 - Announcement of Australias artistic team for the Venice Biennale (Draft).docx

Dear s22(1)(a)(ii)

Please find attached a For Information Brief from Creative Australia to the Minister about the Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team.

Appreciate your assistance in providing this Brief to the Minister.

FYI the announcement is scheduled for 2pm Friday 7 Feb 2025 (draft media release attached). OFTA will work with media team on Minister quote if needed.

Any questions please let s22(1)(a)(ii) or myself know.

Thank you and have a good weekend

s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Government Relations Manager  
 Office of the CEO

T: +61 02 s22(1)(a)(ii) M: +61 s22(1)(a)(ii)  
 s22(1)(a)(ii) [creative.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au)

**Creative Australia**

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[creative.gov.au](https://creative.gov.au)

*We acknowledge the many Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and honour their Elders past and present. We respect their deep enduring connection to their lands, waterways, and surrounding clan groups since time immemorial. We cherish the richness of First Nations Peoples' artistic and cultural expressions*



**FOI**

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Monday, 3 February 2025 10:27 AM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks – I have provided the draft media release and briefing to our media team. I will let you know as soon as we can on the Minister’s decision on a quote.

OFFICIAL

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)> creative.gov.au  
**Sent:** Monday, 3 February 2025 10:23 AM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)> arts.gov.au; s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)> arts.gov.au  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)> creative.gov.au; TODD, Alison <Alison.TODD@arts.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Briefing has been sent through to the MO via s22(1)

Do let us know when you have confirmation on the Minister’s quote for the Media Release so we can provide an update for the media team here.

Thank you

s22(1)(a)(ii)

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)> arts.gov.au  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 January 2025 5:19 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)> creative.gov.au; s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)> arts.gov.au  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)> creative.gov.au; TODD, Alison <Alison.TODD@arts.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**EXTERNAL EMAIL:** This email originated from outside Creative Australia. Be cautious, particularly with links and attachments.

OFFICIAL

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Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks for providing the briefing. Can we suggest that you provide the briefing directly to the Minister's office and cc in s22(1)(a)(ii) and Ali.

We will then be able to follow up with the media team here on the Minister's interest in providing a quote.

Thanks

s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) (she/her)

A/g Director • Creative Australia and Performing Arts  
Arts Development and Investment Branch • Office for the Arts

s22(1)(a)(ii) [arts.gov.au](https://arts.gov.au)

P +61 2 s22(1)(a)(ii)

GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

If you have any accessibility requirements for our meeting, please contact me on 02 s22(1)(a)(ii) or via s22(1)(a)(ii) [arts.gov.au](https://arts.gov.au) to arrange. You are also welcome to text me on s22(1)(a)(ii)

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*I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live.  
I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities.  
I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*

OFFICIAL

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii) [creative.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 January 2025 2:39 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii) [arts.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@arts.gov.au)>; s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii) [arts.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@arts.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii) [creative.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au)>; TODD, Alison <[Alison.TODD@arts.gov.au](mailto:Alison.TODD@arts.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team

Dear s22(1)(a)(ii) and s22(1)(a)(ii)

Attached is a Ministerial Brief from Adrian Collette to Minister Burke in relation to the Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team.

Please note that information in this Brief is currently under embargo.

Media release (Att 1) is also in draft form and includes opportunity for the Minister to add a quote if he wants (see highlight).

Appreciate your assistance in forwarding this onto the MO for provision to the Minister. Noting that the announcement is scheduled for 2pm Friday 7 February.

Thank you

s22(1)(a)  
(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Government Relations Manager  
Office of the CEO

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s22(1)(a)(ii)

[creative.gov.au](http://creative.gov.au)

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**FOI**

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 3 February 2025 1:45 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks s22(1)(a)(ii) – much appreciated.

---

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Monday, 3 February 2025 1:39 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii); s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** RE: Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**EXTERNAL EMAIL:** This email originated from outside Creative Australia. Be cautious, particularly with links and attachments.

**OFFICIAL**

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Our media team has confirmed that the MO is happy for Creative Australia to go out without a quote from the Minister.

Thank you  
 s22(1)(a)(ii)

**OFFICIAL**


---

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 3 February 2025 10:23 AM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@arts.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@arts.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>; TODD, Alison <Alison.TODD@arts.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Briefing has been sent through to the MO via s22(1)

Do let us know when you have confirmation on the Minister's quote for the Media Release so we can provide an update for the media team here.

Thank you

s22(1)(a)  
(ii)

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@arts.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 January 2025 5:19 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@arts.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>; TODD, Alison <Alison.TODD@arts.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**EXTERNAL EMAIL:** This email originated from outside Creative Australia. Be cautious, particularly with links and attachments.

## OFFICIAL

Hi s22(1)(a)  
(ii)

Thanks for providing the briefing. Can we suggest that you provide the briefing directly to the Minister's office and cc in s22(1)(a)(ii) and Ali.

We will then be able to follow up with the media team here on the Minister's interest in providing a quote.

Thanks

s22(1)  
(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) (she/her)

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 Arts Development and Investment Branch • Office for the Arts  
 s22(1)(a)(ii) @arts.gov.au

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 GPO Box 594 Canberra, ACT 2601

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 I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities.  
 I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*

## OFFICIAL

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 January 2025 2:39 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@arts.gov.au>; s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@arts.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>; TODD, Alison <Alison.TODD@arts.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Creative Australia Ministerial Brief - Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team

Dear s22(1)(a)(ii),

Attached is a Ministerial Brief from Adrian Collette to Minister Burke in relation to the Venice Biennale 2026 Artistic Team.

Please note that information in this Brief is currently under embargo.

Media release (Att 1) is also in draft form and includes opportunity for the Minister to add a quote if he wants (see highlight).

Appreciate your assistance in forwarding this onto the MO for provision to the Minister. Noting that the announcement is scheduled for 2pm Friday 7 February.

Thank you

s22(1)(a)(ii)

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 s22(1)(a)(ii) [creative.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au)

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Fri, 7 Feb at 11:44 am

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Also fyi

the announcement is happening today if the artist for Venice - you may want to take with you in your travels the briefing that Creative Australia sent you about the process to select the artist etc. might come up in media over the weekend.

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## FOI

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 7 February 2025 5:30 PM  
**To:** TODD, Alison; s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** FW: Media summary - Venice Biennale 2026 - Artistic team announcement

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Ali and s22(1)(a)(ii)

Happy Friday – sending along the first set of media articles about today’s Venice Biennale 2026 team announcement for your awareness.

You might not be able to follow the Stream links – but you can no doubt search from them in google if necessary.

Best wishes,

s22(1)(a)(ii)

---

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 7 February 2025 3:46 PM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Media summary - Venice Biennale 2026 - Artistic team announcement

[View online](#)

**Friday 7th February 2025**

**VB2026 Artistic team** 7 items



## This artist fled civil war, now he'll represent Australia on the world stage

The Sydney Morning Herald By Linda Morris  
 Friday 7 February 2025, 2:00pm AEDT

Multimedia artist Khaled Sabsabi, a one-time hip-hop performer, has been selected to represent the country at the Venice Biennale.

[VIEW ONLINE](#)

## SYNDICATIONS

[Brisbane Times](#), [The Age](#), [The Sydney Morning Herald](#), [WA Today](#)



## Khaled Sabsabi to represent Australia at Venice Biennale: 'I felt this wouldn't happen because of who I am'

**The Guardian** By Nour Haydar  
Friday 7 February 2025, 2:00pm AEDT

The western Sydney artist, who fled Lebanon's civil war as a child, has been selected to represent Australia at the world's oldest and most prestigious exhibition

[VIEW ONLINE](#)



## Meet the artist bringing people closer at the 'Olympics of the art world'

**ABC News** By Hannah Story  
Friday 7 February 2025, 2:03pm AEDT

Khaled Sabsabi has been announced as the next artist to represent Australia at the Venice Biennale, after Archie Moore, who won the top prize in 2024.

[VIEW ONLINE](#)



## Meet the ex-rapper and Eels tragic representing us at arts' 'Olympics'

**Australian Financial Review** By Michael Bailey  
Friday 7 February 2025, 3:22pm AEDT

A refugee from Lebanon's civil war who grew up in western Sydney will be Australia's representative at next year's Venice Biennale.

[VIEW ONLINE](#)



## Western Sydney artist duo represent Australia at Venice

**The Canberra Times** By Farid Farid

Friday 7 February 2025, 2:43pm AEDT

A pair of western Sydney art-makers, visual artist Khaled Sabsabi and curator Michael Dagostino, will represent Australia at...

[VIEW ONLINE](#)

### SYNDICATIONS

Australian Community Media [71 Syndications]



## Who is representing Australia at the 2026 Venice Biennale?

**ArtsHub** By Celina Lei

Friday 7 February 2025, 2:26pm AEDT

Artist Khaled Sabsabi and curator Michael Dagostino will take charge of the Australian Pavilion at the 2026 Venice Biennale.

[VIEW ONLINE](#)



## Khaled Sabsabi to represent Australia at the 61st Venice Biennale: “We need a way forward to exist and co-exist.”

**Art Guide Australia** By editor

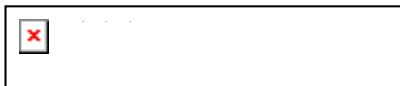
Friday 7 February 2025, 1:00am AEDT

Khaled Sabsabi, the renowned artist known for poignant installations inspired by the language of spiritual and political lineages will represent Australia at next year’s 61st Venice Biennale.

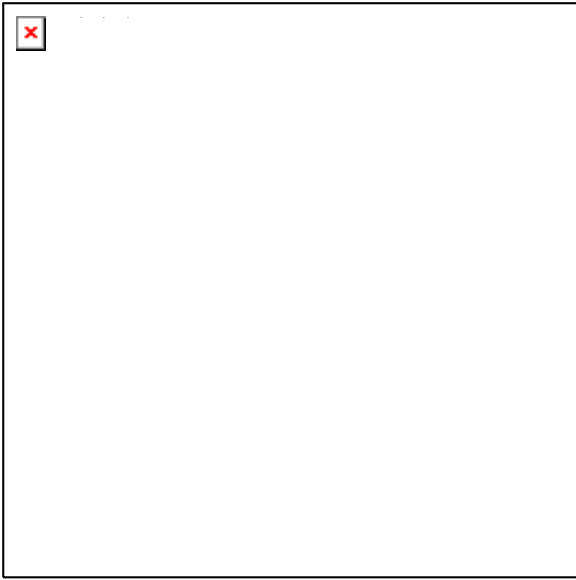
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## FOI

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 13 February 2025 10:24 AM  
**To:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** Media coverage  
**Attachments:** Sky News - The Bolt Report - 12022025.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi s22(1)(a)(ii)

Sharing for your awareness coverage on Sky News (Bolt Report) yesterday evening.

The story has also been shared by the [Australian Jewish Association on Facebook](#), which is attracting some further online commentary.

Best,  
 s22(1)(a)(ii)

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*We acknowledge the many Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and honour their Elders past and present. We respect their deep enduring connection to their lands, waterways, and surrounding clan groups since time immemorial. We cherish the richness of First Nations Peoples' artistic and cultural expressions*



## Television Transcript

**PREPARED: THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2025**

**TITLE: ANDREW BOLT INTERVIEW WITH ROWAN DEAN.**

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**Summary: Andrew Bolt interview with Rowan Dean discussing the Lebanese Muslim artist Khaled Sabsabi being sent to Venice Biennale to represent Australia.**

**Channel: Sky News Regional Australia**

**Program: The Bolt Report**

**Date Broadcast: 12 February 2025**

**Date Broadcast: 7:41 PM - 7:44 PM**

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### TRANSCRIPTION

**ANDREW BOLT:** I want to show you something that is, to me, just so amazing. I mean, says so much. We heard - I really played some of Albanese's - Anthony Albanese's response today, really flat, like he didn't have his heart in it. I think one of the problems here, Rowan, is as you've pointed out many times, the government comes into this with dirty hands, right? The way it's played flag footsies with the Muslim community, backstabbed the Jews for votes. But now this example today, - what timing? The Australian's Yoshi [sic] Bashan reports: Arts Minister Tony Burke, who, as you know, has got a seat with one of the biggest Muslim minorities out of any electorate, I think it's got about more than 30 per cent, is sending to the Venice Biennale, one of the world's top arts festival, this Lebanese Muslim artist, Khaled Sabsabi, supposedly to represent Australia, a man whose artwork includes at least two studies, homages really to the late leader of Hezbollah. Listen, here is an Islamic terrorist group. Now, the Museum of Contemporary Art actually described this particular work as one with the "beams of light shine from his eyes and mouth, suggestive of a divine illumination". Rowan, this artist is now off to Venice on our dime, thanks to Tony Burke. This is sick.

**ROWAN DEAN:** It is absolutely sick. And it shows that the rot that I was talking about is within our institutions as well. And I think the next ten years we're going to see, hopefully in Australia, what is taking place in America right now, which is we have to see - Donald Trump is dismantling these institutions that have had the kind of long March through them, that have all turned Marxist, all turned woke, all turned very hardcore left wing. They use our money, Andrew. That is what is sick. If people want to hold these beliefs or do whatever or paint paintings of whatever terrorists they feel like, good on them, but not on my money, not with my taxes. I want my taxes to go to people, to help people. I do not want to be paying for people to swan around Venice in gondolas, fantasising about Islamic terrorists on my money. Forget it. Donald Trump has said, and Elon Musk has backed up, that they might even be able to balance the US budget simply on the misuse of money that they are uncovering throughout all these organisations. So, let's start. Let's get Peter Dutton and Jacinta Price to start looking at the

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museums, the universities, where the arts grants - where is our money going? Who's it going to? And let's put a stop to it.

**ANDREW BOLT:** Well, again, you know, this really lovely trust in the Liberals. Let us see Jacinta Price's different kettle of fish. Peter Dutton might be too. But Rowan, we've got to hold them to the mark because Liberals in the past have not been-

END

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**FOI**

**From:** Arts - DLO Burke  
**Sent:** Thursday, 13 February 2025 4:30 PM  
**To:** TODD, Alison; s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** Arts - DLO Burke  
**Subject:** FW: Question Time Summary - Thursday 13 February 2025 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Good afternoon Ali and s22(1)(a)(ii)

Please see the below question posed within the Senate this afternoon.

I note there was a bit more context provided in the question not captured below.

The question was taken on notice.

Thank you

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Departmental Liaison Officer • Office of the Hon Tony Burke MP  
 Minister for Home Affairs  
 Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs  
 Minister for Cyber Security  
 Minister for the Arts  
 s22(1)(a)(ii) [mo.arts.gov.au](mailto:mo.arts.gov.au)  
 M s22(1)(a)(ii)  
 Suite MG 43, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

**OFFICIAL**

**From:** Parliamentary <Parliamentary@infrastructure.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 13 February 2025 4:15 PM  
**To:** Arts - DLO Burke <s22(1)(a)(ii) MO.arts.gov.au>; Parliamentary <Parliamentary@infrastructure.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Question Time Summary - Thursday 13 February 2025 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Hi s22(1)(a)(iii)

The question was directed to the Prime Minister (represented by Minister Wong) as follows:

My question is to the minister representing the Prime Minister Senator Wong. The Australian government funded organisation Creative Australia has announced the artistic representative to the Venice Bienella, he features the dead terrorist leader in his art works. With such appalling anti-Semitism in our country, why is the Albanese government allowing a person who highlights a terrorist leader in his artwork to represent Australia on the international stage at the Venice Bienalle?

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*Please note: This is the Parliamentary Services section’s joint team inbox, which should be used for all parliamentary queries and has replaced the previous individual team inboxes (except for [PDMS.Support@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:PDMS.Support@infrastructure.gov.au), which remains as a service helpdesk for PDMS+). As of 03 February 2025, please send all parliamentary enquires to [Parliamentary@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:Parliamentary@infrastructure.gov.au)*

**Kind Regards**

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director - Parliamentary

- Government Services Branch
- People, Culture and Change

s22(1)(a)(ii) [infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:infrastructure.gov.au)

P +02 s22(1)(a)

MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI
✓	✓	🏠	🏠	✓

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*I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live.  
 I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities.  
 I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.*

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**FOI**

**From:** s22(1)(a)(ii) <s22(1)(a)(ii)@creative.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Saturday, 15 February 2025 3:39 PM  
**To:** TODD, Alison  
**Cc:** s22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** Daily Telegraph article  
**Attachments:** September 11 'thank you' artwork forced award backflip.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi Ali,

First of the expected two articles I mentioned earlier.

Best,  
 s22(1)(a)(ii)

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