



Message from the Honourable Melanie Mark
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport



I am excited to introduce myself as the new Minister for Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. I am the MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant. I am Nisga'a, Gitksan, Cree and Ojibway. I am the first First Nations woman to serve in the B.C. legislature and in B.C.'s Cabinet. I have a strong connection to my culture and a deep passion for delivering on our government's commitments on reconciliation, equity and anti-racism. I view my role as Minister as an advocate for arts and culture at the Cabinet table. I will advocate for you. I've already had the opportunity to meet some of you and I look forward to meeting more people in the months ahead.

I'm also pleased to introduce my colleague, Bob D'Eith, as the new Parliamentary Secretary for Arts and Film. Bob is passionate about arts and culture, has been active on this file since the pandemic started and has a life-long involvement in the arts. Bob will be working closely to identify strategies to drive a strong recovery from the impacts of the pandemic. His appointment shows how strongly Premier John Horgan and our government values the arts and creative sectors. I'm proud to announce that Bob will be leading a performing arts sector roundtable focused on recovery and reopening. We will share more information on how to get involved in the coming weeks.

It's been a year since the COVID-19 pandemic began and public health orders were implemented that prohibited mass gatherings. This was a difficult but necessary step that I know has deeply impacted everyone across the arts and culture sector. Now, as we look ahead to the next year we must work together to keep the sector resilient and build back better.

I want to acknowledge the incredible work the arts and culture sector has done this past year to keep staff and patrons safe. You have modified your physical spaces, you have adapted the way you make art and most importantly, you have paused performances and gatherings when required. You pivoted to outdoor events and online venues. You've demonstrated innovation, shown resilience and have found solutions.

Our government understands the impact the pandemic and resulting health orders has had on everyone in the arts and culture sector. To help organizations "keep the lights on", we provided \$21 million in targeted funding. I am proud to say that we have already distributed \$15.7 million in supplements through the BC Arts Council to more than 550 organizations throughout B.C.



Organizations are using this funding right now to pay their utility bills, rent, staff, artists and balance their budgets. And soon we will announce the recipients of both Pivot programs and share the exciting work artists and organizations are doing in their communities.

To provide certainty to the sector, the BC Arts Council is maintaining stable Operating Assistance funding this year. We know these organizations are key employers and support numerous artists in their communities and we're committed to keeping the sector resilient. Thank you for all of your tireless effort and hard work.

It's time to both reflect on where we've been, and look ahead to the coming years. As a new government we took this opportunity to refresh the Council's leadership. I am pleased to welcome Dr. Sae-Hoon Stan Chung as Chair and Dana Claxton as Vice Chair of the BC Arts Council. I will be meeting with them in the coming weeks about our shared goals. I look to the Council's support and advice as together we build for the future.

I know we have a difficult journey ahead but with vaccines in sight, I am feeling a greater sense of optimism. Our government is here for you and will continue to work with you. We will paddle together to keep the sector resilient, chart a path to recovery and use this opportunity to advance equity and inclusion across the sector. Together, the future will be brighter.

T'ooyaksim' N'iisim'

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Mark".

Honourable Melanie Mark

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