
From: outlandsound <outlandsound@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 4:29 PM
To: Jennifer Franki-Smith
Cc: Cory Vanthuyne; Kieron Testart
Subject: Statement regarding lottery royalty sharing with the arts.

I've been advised to provide my comment on sharing lottery funding between sports and arts. I am currently in university in Montreal and unable to attend the event but I would appreciate if this would be heard. It is as follows.

The Northwest Territories is unique in that it is the only region in Canada that does not share the royalties from lottery sales between sports and arts organizations. For many years in the arts community we've brought up this issue as we are chronically underfunded in the arts and behind our neighbors to the east and west never mind how far behind we are compared to the south.

It is a problem and as the territory tries to move forward we always find ourselves being held back by the scope and depth of our social problems. Residential schools, substance abuse, trauma, suicide, etc. This makes everything a challenge and we are currently maintaining a system that does not have the ability to fix the damage that has been done to the spirit of the people. Problems passed down to the generations that followed persist and effect the outlook and expectations of people to this day. Feelings of being overwhelmed, helpless, isolated, angry, hopeless, frightened, trapped are common all across the region. People respond through drugs and alcohol, violence, crime, suicide, despair, disengagement, etc. As an indigenous man I fear especially for the future of other indigenous men in northern Canada, suicide and self-destruction is a part of regular life and it's a demographic which has some of the worst markers than any other in the country.

We put an incredible amount of faith in sports as our primary socially beneficial activity. I think it is either from bias or total lack of imagination that we deny this same consideration for the arts. Indoor soccer and hockey are not in any way going to address where we find the state of ourselves at this point in our history. But art will, that's what it does and what it is. It is truth, listening, storytelling, sharing, affirming, exploratory, it speaks to everything a group of people are and who they aspire to be. It is the phenomena of their existence and an essential part of human existence. Art isn't something that just gets hung on a wall, it is in nearly everything we buy and consume from music, art, television, video games, books, magazines, cuisine, mobile apps, websites, clothing, architecture, etc. The benefits of developing our own capacities in these areas do not have to be explained in the rest of the country, it's an essential part of business, so what does that lack of awareness say about us? What makes us parse out our support and use it for appeasement or as social licence.

Currently we provide support for the arts like an allowance as opposed to a mortgage. We are deeply lacking in arts based infrastructure and stable core funding for organizations who are always living next to the edge of survival.

The arts are not seen as they should, as an investment in people, their culture and their future. Imagine what goes unheard by our deference to established practices. The songs, stories, artwork, dreams and inspiration that have gone and will go unheeded and what that does to the people of this territory. It makes them voiceless, it renders so many people mute at a time in this territories history when we need them present and engaged. Traditionally, we used to rely on hunter/gatherers for our survival and now we need

creator/collaborators. We need to build those people up as a community and a territory for the sake of our current and future generations. Imagine what that north would be like?

Unless we have become more uncomfortable with change than despair. Please finally give the arts their fair share.

Travis Mercredi

Sent from my Bell Samsung device over Canada's largest network.