



**JULIAN LEESER MP
SHADOW ATTORNEY-GENERAL
SHADOW MINISTER FOR THE ARTS
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BEROWRA**

MEDIA STATEMENT

BURKE SHOULD BACK, NOT BASH, THE ARTS

Friday, 26 September 2025

Sculpture by the Sea is one of the premier events in Sydney's arts calendar.

What began as a one-day exhibition in 1997 has grown into a beloved cultural institution, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year and delivering a major boost to the local economy.

Instead of backing the event, Arts Minister Tony Burke has chosen to attack it and its organisers.

It is extraordinary that they have had to issue a statement to correct misinformation about their support for artists, and that one of Australia's leading public art festivals cannot secure a meeting with the Minister.

It reflects the feedback I hear so often from the arts community; this Minister is simply too busy to give the sector the attention it deserves.

Good arts policy starts with fostering opportunities for artists to showcase their work.

Tony Burke should apologise, stop the attacks, and start supporting one of Australia's most loved cultural events.

ENDS.

Media: Clayton Hopper | 0449 553 243 | clayton.hopper@aph.gov.au