

# National Cultural Policy Submission

**Anonymous**

Submitted: As an artist

**What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you? Feel free to respond to any or all pillars:**

## **The Centrality of the Artist**

Artists continue to provide the largest subsidy for the arts in Australia. In the small to medium theatre sector, in which I have worked in for nearly forty years, employment is irregular, and wage levels remain low. As funding has been channelled away from the sector over decades rehearsal times have shrunk and consequently artists are expected to do more unpaid work. In the 1980s standard rehearsal times for a new Australian theatre script might were 4 or 5 or sometimes 6 weeks. That time is now reduced to 3, and not infrequently, 2 weeks. This is simply inadequate for high quality work to take place. The result is that actors must put in unpaid hours before rehearsals begin to achieve a professional standard.

## **Strong Institutions**

The small to medium theatre sector is dying. Over the past two decades numerous theatre-making organisations have gone under, largely as a result of ever-diminishing funding. This issue has been raised in more than one Australia Council report, one of the most recent being *Making Art Work - An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*, by David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya of the Department of Economics, Macquarie University. The loss of these small to medium theatre companies is largely the result of scarce government funding being increasingly directed towards the organisations of National Performing Arts Partnership Framework. This needs to change.