

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am an artist and artswoker working in Brisbane, the two pillars most relevant to me are 3 & 4.

Key Issues:

- Precarity of working conditions - understaffing, burnout, reliance on volunteer and (unfixed) contract labour
- High real estate costs for organisations and individuals

Suggestions:

- Continue work on creative workplaces initiative
- Greater funding and support for ARI's, micro organisations and independent artist organisations. --> To pay staff, to offset real-estate costs so that they are more stable businesses
- Create an initiative to subsidise or allow free access for Brisbane artists to use abandoned real-estate spaces in the CBD

I have recently had a very bad experience in an arts organisation where I was in a dream role and had to quit because I experienced significant burn out. I believe working to ensure better working conditions for artists should continue to be of highest priority. All artists I know work at least 2 jobs, most of them more, in addition to their practice. Protections for contractors, ensuring ongoing work, or support for orgs to further train and offer more for their staff would be helpful.

More support for ARIs - Artist Run Initiatives is of the utmost importance. Contemporary art orgs, larger orgs, and institutions have access to funding streams that these smaller orgs do not. Research and advocacy by All Conference (in book Permanent Recession, 2019) shows that these smaller organisations are our highest cultural producers and that they have the highest visitation rates per funding amount out of any other type of cultural organisation. They commission more new works, show more artists and yet they have the lowest level of government support. Most are forced to work on a month by month basis due to real estate precarity and are predominantly volunteer run.

More support for these organisations to be able to pay staff and artists would significantly improve the amount of works produced but also improve the dire working conditions for both the ARI runners and artists. We cannot continue to expect the arts industry to run on such a large volume of volunteer labour. It is completely unsustainable.

Real estate costs are the largest cost for these orgs and the greatest barrier to new ones being established. In Brisbane, two thirds of our ARIs and artist organisations, don't even have a physical location. Artists are having to fork out thousands at venues that offer hires for extremely short shows (most often only one night). This results in artists not producing work they otherwise would, moving interstate, or ceasing to pursue art altogether. The incredibly limited access to affordable space stunts the quality, and amount of work we are able to create and adds a monetary barrier-to-entry when living costs are already extremely high.

An initiative to support artists to use abandoned retail spaces (of which there are MANY) would significantly support cultural production and would place us well to fulfil the goal of this "cultural olympiad" to make Brisbane, and Queensland, a cultural leader.