

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I work at a museum in Melbourne and am an independent playwright and actor. Arts funding affects me in both of these areas - as a museum worker we have recently had restructures and staffing cuts to save money, while the budgets for our exhibitions get smaller by the year. Both of these measures are due to government funding cuts, but ultimately it means that the city that so proudly boasts cultural offerings to tourists is not supporting its institutions to provide the kind of experiences the city can be proud of, due to a lack of human and financial resources.

Similarly, as an independent artist, I have been rejected from every opportunity I have applied for – whether it be a programmed slot at a mid-level theatre or a grant to get money to support a project. There are just too many people competing for the minuscule amount of support available to independent and emerging artists. Writers make the work that Australia becomes known for - on our screens and stages, and yet the number of opportunities to develop new writers is staggeringly small. Internationally, gems are discovered at Fringe festivals which go on to be blockbusters on screens and stages (think Fleabag and Baby Reindeer), and yet our Fringe festivals are woefully ill-equipped to support emerging artists who are incapable of funding their own productions, as they will struggle to recoup their costs through ticket sales alone.

My proposal:

- The big theatres need funding to offer proper discounts to the youth and audience segments that need to be encouraged to go to the theatre to build arts attendance as a cultural norm. A full-time student price of \$90 and under 30 price of \$49 for a ticket to the MTC is laughable and absolutely prohibitive in a cost of living crisis. Ticket prices in general mean that the arts remains the playground of the wealthy and this urgently needs to change, especially as current theatre audiences are actually dying out and not being replaced by the youth who simply cannot afford to attend
- Big theatres should also be given funding to offer opportunities to new writers to meet the team and build networks at that level. An excellent example of this is the Royal Court in London. Their Writer's Card initiative provides discounts, meet-ups and funding and submission opportunities that are varied and inclusive. Their outreach is building not only their audiences but emerging voices in the industry
- Mid-level theatres need more funding to be able to offer a broad scope of development opportunities to emerging writers and makers, while also not being ham-strung by diversity requirements in their reporting. If every theatre offers development opportunities to the same small cohort of POC, trans, disabled, First Nations and LGBTQI+ candidates, where are the other emerging artists supposed to get a morsel of support from?
- Ireland's Basic Income for the Arts is an incredible initiative and should be considered in Australia at a Federal Level