

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual

Helen Hopkins



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I welcome the invitation to provide feedback on the development of Australia's new National Cultural Policy.

As Board Chair of La Mama Theatre and Co-Artistic Director of small independent company, The Shift Theatre, I am intimately acquainted with the independent theatre scene. Supported by La Mama in developing our productions, our small company has successfully toured new Australian work to New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Queensland, as well as extensively throughout regional Victoria and to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

In these turbulent times, the community connections fostered by the arts are more critical than ever. This policy represents a historic opportunity to provide long-term stability and longevity to small-to-medium arts organisations. This can be effectively achieved in several key ways:

1. Small organisations like La Mama Theatre require predictable, long-term funding structures so they can direct their primary energy toward supporting the independent artists who create new work.
2. I strongly urge the consideration of a dedicated fund specifically targeting small-to-medium arts organisations to safeguard their financial sustainability into the future.
3. The policy must formally acknowledge the vital role these smaller organisations play within the broader cultural ecosystem. They serve as the foundational birthplace for emerging artists and provide crucial lifelong career support for independent theatremakers who are essential to sharing Australian stories.

The qualities that the arts bring to our society are invaluable: diversity, community, mutual respect, critical thinking and innovation. Independent artists and the theatres like La Mama are at the heart of this. The time is now to support the next generation.