

My name is Lana Page and I am an emerging theatre artist working on Gadigal and Dharug land. I have completed a Bachelor of Performance and Theatre (Acting intensive) at the University of Wollongong (2026) and am now working within the Independent theatre sector.

My main concern as an artist is the removal of previous investment to an already underfunded sector. The degree I completed BPT will not exist anymore, with it recessing back to a Bachelor of Arts. A degree that used to be healthy and competitive 10-15 years ago has now been dissolved. With less and less HECS supported performance centre degrees in NSW it means that young artists have to travel interstate to other organisations like WAPPA and VCA, pay thousands out of pocket at independent funded training just as JMC academy, or have no access at all. The latter is what is happening.

One of the leading independent theatres in the Sydney theatre scene, is KXT Bakehouse on Broadway. This theatre has been the incubator for successful artists and a pathway to create new work. This year their funding was cut.

With more and more independent theatres closing down. There becomes less of a connection and pipeline between indie theatre and professional theatre. How can we develop new artists if there is no opportunity to incubate work? Independent theatre is the backbone for new artists to create, with less spaces like KXT in Sydney, hundreds of artists are funneled into these underfunded spaces, that don't have enough space, money or infrastructure to invest in them all.

As a young artist, I cannot see a possibility where I can make a living to feel secure as an artist in Australia. There aren't enough pathways for youth and emerging artists to invest early into their creativity and allow them to develop their skills. As an artist from Western Sydney, this is at a more chronic level.

This year I have been working with PYT Fairfield in their youth Ensemble Program. More investment into programs like this one are a building block to connect more Western Sydney youth into the arts sector, which is predominantly dominated by Inner Sydney residents. The importance of community and cultural development in arts decision making is paramount as more and more Western Sydney communities are 'left out of the room', left out of the conversation, and unconsidered. PYT Fairfield is the only professional theatre in Western Sydney, with youth at the forefront of their company. Only one pathway for all of the youth in Western Sydney?

I am grateful for the opportunity that Australia's National Cultural Policy offers, but I am more excited at its future capacity to consider the voices of the communities, individuals and companies that are offering solutions to propose a new Policy for 2026.