

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My perspective is both as an arts administrator for a small but national organisation, and a professional stage & production manager. My concerns which the next cultural policy has the opportunity to address are three-fold: the wellbeing of arts workers, the protections needed against the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence, and the censorship of artists.

The debut iteration of Revive has made some steps forward in prioritising First Nations artists & stories and putting deliberate focus on artists-as-workers. However, there is still significant change needed, particularly around Pillars 3 and 4.

-For the wellbeing of arts workers, I feel compelled to speak to something I have witnessed time and time again as a professional stage manager. In this role, I (and most stage managers) are protected against some of the worst effects of the freelance economy through a full-time contract structure. However, peers of mine who are designers (lighting, sound, video, set, costume) sit in an increasingly precarious position where industry-wide standard fees sit well below a liveable wage - often around the \$15/hr mark. The consequences of this are severe - to the success of art-making, to these arts workers' wellbeing, & to the sustainability of these careers. Designers are forced to over-commit to multiple concurrent projects to make something approximating a living wage. This in turn threatens the longevity of the theatre-making ecology as artists burn out quickly & repeatedly, and talent drains to other sectors purely from the need to make a living wage. A lack of inclusion in industry documentation - such as the Live Performance Award - embeds this. Designers need fair work minimum protections to ensure they can sustain their careers while making minimum wage (at least).

-The adoption of AI (LLMs specifically) has accelerated dramatically ahead of the speed at which appropriate protections, policy, and procedure has been generated, leaving gaping vulnerabilities. Writers' copywritten work is under constant threat from huge international corporations seeking to steal and scrape it, and artists and arts workers reach for the assistance of generative AI often out of a desperate need to find additional time-saving measures in attempts to get through applications and workloads where resourcing is paper-thin. Longevity and sustainability are jeopardised as AI is reached for in this way: it is a bandaid-fix which hides issues of under-funding and under-staffing. On top of this, concerns about the current landscape of AI rollout - noting the documented impact of LLMs to energy consumption, water consumption, and the pollution which extraction of rare earth minerals brings, on top of privacy concerns, data security concerns, and copyright concerns - means artists, arts workers, and organisations are asked to choose between their values and getting the job done.

-The nation-wide censorship of artists who express political opinions is of utmost, grave concern, and must be addressed in the next iteration of the national cultural policy. No artist or arts-worker should be made to temper their art or have their livelihood threatened in the face of censorship instigated by internationally-focussed funders with political agendas. A front-footed approach protecting artists must be adopted else this threat continue to erode artists and arts-workers ability to create and express freely.