

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I would love to contribute to the redevelopment of the National Cultural Policy. It is vital that Australia continues to create strategies that centre the importance of the arts to our national identity. We are at risk of losing all Australian playwrights who are working class, First Nations and or from diverse backgrounds due to a system for art making that relies on working for free 80 percent of the time. Without strategies and changes you will lose Australian stories and risk losing Australian theatre.

I am Laneikka, a playwright, filmmaker and actor whose work has been funded by institutions including Belvoir St Theatre, Create NSW, Screen Australia, Inner West Council and the City of Sydney. On paper, I look like a success, securing more than \$100,000 in government funding for theatre projects. However, 80 percent of this funding goes to creating this project. Leaving me with this than 5,000 - 10,000k to live on each year (that's LESS than my rent!) I am living on the poverty line and constantly one step away from homelessness.

I currently work two non-arts day jobs while simultaneously writing a commission for Belvoir St Theatre. My work weeks regularly exceed 72 hours, and at least 70 percent of that labour is unpaid. The reality is that without stronger government support, it is virtually impossible to sustain a long-term career in the arts.

I would like to recommend the following...

Centrality of the Artist

- Affordable Housing for Artists set at \$300 maximum per week in the LGA of CBD's (artists must live near their work and cannot afford to live near there currently) there has to be THOUSANDS of dedicated apartments
- A Commission a National Inquiry into the potential benefits of the Universal Basic Income for Artists
- Introducing a nation-wide tax reform policy. Current tax law treats artistic grants and prizes as assessable income. For an artist receiving a \$30,000 grant, up to \$10,000 can be lost to tax.

First Nations Stories First

- Without affordable housing and more resources and opportunities to develop art, you will not have First Nations stories or working class stories. The only people able to tell their story currently are people who can afford to not work and write plays for free which are; rich white people.

A Place for Every Story:

* There needs to be more venues that are dedicated to the DEVELOPMENT of playwriting (currently there are only FIVE opportunities a year to apply to have your play developed (ATYP commission, APT commission, Griffin Studio, Griffin Award, STC Award) FIVE opportunities for over 2000 playwrights living in Sydney! It is impossible to make plays better due to a lack of resources to be able to develop your play in the first place! And mainstage theatre companies want plays that have been developed to such a high standard but don't have the money to develop work to this standard (then they end up programming work from the UK or the US) Without meaningful investment in playwright development we risk losing contemporary Australian stories that aren't for the middle class, as companies increasingly rely on overseas work that arrives already resourced and market-tested.

Cultural Infrastructure

- A 12 month national review of the state of the Australian not-for-profit theatre sector

Artists are in poverty. Artists are steps away from being homeless. I am a successful artist and I make less than 10k a year from arts work. Please listen and help us.

Laneikka