

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am pleased to have the opportunity to share my unique insight and perspective as we work to creating a sustainable and fairer arts landscape in this country.

I want to begin by saying I am incredibly displeased that AI is being used in this process. Not only is AI harmful to the planet, but it is detrimental to the very lifeblood of the arts and it feels disheartening that at the very outset of this review we as a community are being undermined in this way.

I am a freelance actor and playwright. I have a Bachelor's degree and continue to train every year to improve my knowledge-base and expertise, however only a small portion of my income actually comes from my professional field that I have trained in. Instead I have 3 casual jobs that I balance in order to be able to pay my rent and eat, while still being afforded the flexibility to pursue my passion and what I have trained in. I am also on job seeker, because my three casual jobs simply do not make enough for me to survive in [REDACTED]. I typically start work at 7am, work till 6pm, attend a rehearsal in the evening till 10pm, go home, complete work from home tasks for my teaching job (such as marking, lesson planning, or corresponding with parents), and do it all again 7 days a week. This isn't sustainable.

I want to be able to work full time in my industry but it is not financially viable, the quantity of work is simply not available, and the national appetite for culture is not being shepherded by cultural leaders and peak bodies in order to create jobs and appetite for theatre and the arts.

Ireland recently tested and implemented a wildly successful universal basic income for artists. I would love to see something similar implemented here. This would remove significant financial pressure, allowing artists the time they need to actually create art. For me, this would mean I could scale back the time I spend working casually out of my field, and instead dedicate more time to creating my art, working in community, and collaborating with others. Much of my work is about community building at the intersection of theatre and climate action, and a universal basic income for artists would allow me to focus on this important area.

I am also the artistic director of a theatre company dedicated making the theatre environmentally sustainable. I strongly believe that if we do not safeguard the arts now, they will not last through the incoming climate crisis. Our company works to prove it is possible to radically reduce carbon emissions while still creating works of great artistic merit. We have produced wildly popular shows across the last 5 years, and have also run many community events dedicated to greening the arts.

Climate action is essential if we want to safe guard the arts, and a national arts policy needs to mandate climate action into all work.

I hope to be heard, and that this is a turning point for the survival of artists in our country.