

National Cultural Policy Submission

1472831

Public and anonymous

Individual

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is [REDACTED]. I am a director, theatre maker and video artist based in Sydney, and a core member of re:group performance collective — an independent theatre collective who create and produce our own new work. Our work has toured Australia and been presented at Adelaide Festival, the Opera House, Darwin Festival, Perth Festival, Belvoir, Mona Foma, PACT, STC and Next Wave.

I also work as a freelance video designer, dramaturg and director working with TR Warszawa, Branch Nebula, Aphids, My Darling Patricia, Nick Cave, Applespiel, Studio A, and Chiara Guidi. I am an artistic associate with Erth Visual & Physical Inc (2014–26) and have toured with them throughout the UK, UAE, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and Japan.

My recent works include POV (Auawirleben Theaterfestival Bern 2026, Adelaide Festival 2026, Perth Festival 2026, Rising 2025, Belvoir 2024), DVA/LICA (LADO Croatia 2025), POWERPLAY (TR Warszawa 2026), Life Is a Dream (Belvoir 2025), Autotune (Opera House 2024), Oh Deer! (Rising 2023), Sex Magic (Griffin 2023), UFO (Griffin 2023), The Sucker (Brand X 2021) and What the Ocean Said (Opera House 2022).

I am writing this submission because I have had a rather good last couple of years — we have been presented around Australia at a lot of the major festivals — and despite that, I am looking to move overseas and take my art with me. I want to explain why, because I don't think I am alone.

I work week by week. Contract by contract. A work usually lasts four to eight weeks, and then I need to have another one lined up after it. There aren't many opportunities at a larger scale. I need more money than the sector can offer me, and the current situation has made me decide I want to leave.

The arts ecology in Sydney, and in Australia more broadly, is the reason. Large producing bodies are underfunded and stripped of budgets year by year, and can't afford to support enough artists. They are looking for small one-person shows or very specific things that fit a narrow commercial window. The venues that can present my kind of work can't afford to have us. The alternative spaces that used to hold this work — PACT, Performance Space, Liveworks — either no longer exist in the form they did, or can no longer carry it. Experimental work isn't considered, because subscriber models don't reward it. The larger companies have become more conservative. This has happened over decades and because the government won't support these companies to be more daring.

Our shows are appealing. Young people like them. Old people like them. But they are experimental, and it is hard to sell on a first ticket. It requires an audience willing to take a risk, and a company willing to take a risk. With the current funding of companies and artists — especially the reliance on subscriber and philanthropy models — there is no room for risk, and therefore no room for me.

This is the situation: I have a career on paper, an international touring profile, and a body of work that audiences respond to, and I still cannot build a sustainable life as an artist in this country. If that is true for me, it is true for a generation of artists below me who will not get the chance to build the track record I have, because the pathway has been quietly closed.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]