

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## Auspicious Arts Projects Inc (AAP)

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

### About Auspicious Arts Projects.

Auspicious Arts Projects is a not-for-profit creative community management organisation. We provide independent artists with a secure and accessible framework to assist them with creative developments and producing work.

Being auspiced by Auspicious means that artists have the benefits and financial protection of working with a larger organisation, while remaining independent and in creative control. With an open door policy and nearly 30 years industry experience, we've worked with projects across the complete independent arts spectrum.

We also work with a range of arts organisations and local councils to provide administrative and financial support.

To give you an idea of the scope of our work;

### In 2021 Auspicious:

- Auspiced over 500 projects
- Issued 4700 artist and crew contracts



Take a look [here](#) for more information about our services.

We welcome the reinstatement of a National Cultural Policy, and appreciate the opportunity to provide a submission.

While we acknowledge all the pillars are important, and worthy of response, we are focusing on **The Centrality of the Artist**, as we see the challenges faced by independent artists on a daily basis, and we believe this is where our expertise lies.

## 1. The Centrality of the Artist

### CHALLENGES

Based on our experiences working with independent artists and producers we identify the following as key challenges:

#### Decrease in Federal Arts Funding

Federal arts funding decreased by nearly 5% since 2007 whilst the population increased by 17%\*

We have seen a significant decrease in how many small to medium companies receive Federal funding.

Ausco Funded Small to Medium companies:\*\*

- 2016- 128
- 2020- 95

*\*<https://humanities.org.au/power-of-the-humanities/new-report-presents-the-big-picture-on-government-arts-and-culture-funding/>*

*\*\* <https://www.artshub.com.au/news/news/sector-in-shock-as-australia-council-4-year-funding-announced-260139-2366>*

#### Lack of Wages Growth

As an example the equity rate for an actor has increased less than 20% in 10 years.

Meanwhile house prices have gone up **100%** in 10 years. \*\*\*

MEAA rates for an actor:

- 2012- \$998 per week (no Sundays)
- 2022- \$1145 per week (no Sundays)

*\*\*\*<https://www.smh.com.au/property/news/do-house-prices-really-double-every-10-years-20211203-p59eif.html>*

#### Unpaid labour and low wages for artists.

A mid-career independent artist generally spends about 6-10 weeks per year writing grants, with a 10-30% success rate.

An artist's total average income is 21% below the national average.\*

*\*[https://tna.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/TNA\\_2020\\_Report\\_This-Is-How-We-Do-It.pdf](https://tna.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/TNA_2020_Report_This-Is-How-We-Do-It.pdf)*

#### Shortage of Production and Tech crew

The lack of trained and experienced production workers has reached crisis point in our sector.

Arts Centre Melbourne is currently running a training programme "Tech Connect"\* but this doesn't help the independent sector, as once workers are working for organisations, they tend to stay there.

*\*<https://www.cxnetwork.com.au/arts-centre-melbourne-introduces-ground-breaking-technical-training-program-to-queensland-theatres/>*

In a recent survey conducted by Auspicious and First In Last Out **57%** of respondents found it **impossible** or **very difficult** to find available production workers.

If you have needed to engage a production worker, in the last twelve months or for an upcoming/planned project, how difficult was it to find a suitably qualified and experienced candidate?



### Recommendations:

We would like to see the following actions to remedy these challenges.

#### Australia Council

- Double the funding for the Australia Council across the board
- Fund more small to medium companies especially Youth Arts/First Nations/Deaf&Disabled
- Re-instatement of funding for emerging artists such as the defunct Art Start grant.
- More fellowships for artists across all career stages
- Increase the amounts that artists can apply for, with a requirement that artists are paid properly
- Additional funding for access costs for workers and audiences.
- Funding to support production and technical crew through mentoring and professional development programmes for graduates.

#### Other

- Training pathways through Universities and TAFES for production and tech crew
- Reversal of the decision to increase university fees for arts and humanities.
- Artists in schools residency programs (similar to Creative Workers in Schools-RAV)
- Changes to Centrelink so that an artists practice can be considered 'seeking employment', along with the adoption of an annual averaging process for artists' fluctuating income as is done by the ATO.

For further recommendations AAP would like to endorse the submission made by Theatre Network Australia.

### How would you like us to attribute your words?

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