

Senate Inquiry Submission
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For the purposes of this submission, I will focus on employment and career pathway-related impacts of the recent activities of Senator Brandis in relation to federal arts funding. I am doing this because of my long-standing drive to provide creatives and innovators with the best opportunities to excel in their chosen field, the central motivation of my career. I have had the pleasure of working alongside some of the hardest working artists and producers in Australia.

Who am I?

I am a knowledgeable arts industry manager. My leadership roles in Queensland's arts organisations:

Ausdance Queensland, Executive Director since April 2011. I am sector representative, advocate and strategic director, business and strategic plan writer and implementer, fundraiser/grant writer, regional and metro program manager, office manager, financial manager, committee liaison/coordinator and arts business consultant to artist/producers. Currently, my grant tally is approximately \$1,132,000 for our sector; and combined earned and in-kind revenues now approximately 59% of turnover, if you include accountable in-kind donations. In the past three years by example, I have managed 35 devolved grants to artists for creative development, auspiced 14 individual grants, as well as managing in excess of \$380,000 for the G20 cultural program. To put employment and conditions of arts workers into perspective, for example, my gross earnings are approximately \$272,000 over four years at Ausdance Queensland. I am most proud of my ongoing work to ensure our sector workers get paid properly.

Topology music ensemble/company General Manager (2009-2011), where I was business and strategic plan writer and implementer, business developer, sales and logistics manager, fundraiser and grant writer. I took Topology to triennial organisation status, and learnt how to really be a producer.

Flying Arts, Marketing and Communications Manager (2007-2009). As marketer, collateral designer, print coordinator, copy writer, grant writer including triennial small-to-medium applications, regional arts engagement and touring developer, major events and exhibitions manager, I developed an in depth understanding of the regional arts and the importance of professional development as a life-long learning activity. My team collaborated with State library of Queensland in presenting 50 regional artists in the inaugural Flying Arts Awards exhibition. I also assisted in managing the tour of exhibitions, and consulted with a considerable number of regional gallery managers and council cultural development officers in the development of skills training in their districts. This all occurred after a council amalgamation in which numerous arts workers lost their jobs in regional towns.

Connect Youth Arts, where my job title would have been Enterprise Development Coordinator, if had given ourselves titles (1996-1997). In a voluntary position I created for myself, collaborating with a group of tenacious, curious, highly intelligent future arts workers, I was monthly magazine copy writer and editor, designer, stop-motion film maker, website design workshop facilitator, subscriptions manager, distribution coordinator, event manager and fundraiser. If there had been an ArtStart grant available, I probably would have applied.

The impacts on employment and career pathways

As a result of recent budgetary measures, a \$7.3M reduction in Australia Council funding over four years will directly impact programmes that provide clear solutions for hundreds of emerging artists, artists working intensively with schools; as well as organisations taking opportunities to improve business in capacity building programmes.

The ArtStart program

Clear evidence has shown the confidence and networks that artists gain from participating in Artstart. You will find that some of the current poster boys and girls of the Sydney Dance Company, for example, have received an ArtStart grant in their career development, however I wish to mention a key outcome of this remarkable program. ArtStart contributes to emerging artists' capacity to understand how to and why they should employ other artists in their collaborations, strengthening their careers. The evidence is in. ArtStart accelerates professionalism and places young innovators or creatives in within a large supportive network, emboldens them and expects more of their work. And they deliver.

Artists in Residence (AIR)

Transformative learning and creative experiences give young people in our education system the opportunity to participate and identify with others through artistic expression as a result of Artist in Residence programmes. Developing young learners deserve to have these opportunities, and in fact, this program should be expanded year on year. This wave of cuts has eliminated without consultation or transparency.

Organisational core funding

When a sector is destabilised like this, it causes long-term damage. The economic, social and cultural impacts of the cuts to a core collective of Australia Council-funded organisations have already begun to emerge. While some organisations are beginning to plan closures, others are unable to commit beyond 2016, and not will not attract any further additional philanthropic, state or other funding. Destabilising the arts sector nationally presents the possibility of a wave of unemployment followed potentially with an exodus of highly skilled Australians overseas seeking employment opportunities. This in turn halts the developing momentum in arts sector, particularly in regional centres. The negative social, economic and cultural impacts of reducing regional arts and community development services – which are already stretched – will be felt for an entire generation and the ongoing costs across health, social services and education will outstrip these planned 'efficiencies'.

In short, although I know the Senate will pass this budget and these changes will come to pass. My question is: how does one man have the power to pull apart a nation's entire arts sector, the possibility of transformative arts experiences in schools, as well as and the futures of young innovators ? And I ask, where is the leader that will make unbiased decisions, for the actual participation of the low-brow and the high-brow, the regional, remote, indigenous, culturally diverse, differently able and aged, in all manner of arts experiences in the country?

The work behind us is nothing in comparison to the work ahead of us in the reconstruction of our arts industry.

Ann McLean.