

I'm David Woods, an actor, writer, director and producer working in live theatre, television and film. This creative practice has been my sole employment for the last 28 years. I've directly employed around 50 people over that time and many more indirectly. The work is always temporary by nature and you need to be extremely resilient to deal with the periods of unemployment. As an actor you continuously have to prove yourself - imagine re-applying for your own job with hundreds of other candidates every week, sometimes multiple times a week and most of the time being passed over without any feedback. Imagine pitching for work and never receiving a response or acknowledgement and you start to get a feel of how difficult it is to sustain an arts business. There has to be something special in it to keep artists going and that thing is for me the joyous celebratory nature of gathering, reflecting and growing as a society. Art doesn't just benefit identity and well being and community, it is these things and without it they all suffer. The Covid experience hasn't caused the devaluation of art, it has exposed it. Job keeper represents a massive pay rise for most artists lucky enough to be eligible for it. The arts need to be recognised and cherished as a public service, rolled out equally to all citizens so that participation is open to all.