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To whom it may concern,

I have grown quite frustrated by the funding cuts to Arts in general , whether it be Visual arts at Tafe or the local community colleges. Art is always the first area to receive funding cuts and I always wonder why that is, I have come to the conclusion it is decided by those people who have no idea of what it means to be creative or to think outside the mainstream. Art advocacy within learning institutes such as Tafe and University is seen by financial management as an unimportant vocation yet, it is of high social importance and has been since we first discovered the ability to create cave paintings. It is human nature to explore our innate sense of creativity and helps to question the world around us. There is and always has been a unique link between arts and science, where will we be if we inhibit the ability of people to think creatively and stifle exploration. I started my studies in Ceramics at Wagga Wagga Institute of TAFE over 20 years ago where I was also employed as a Technical Assistant. This opportunity led to a change in my career path and into further study at CSU studying Visual Arts and then onto Sydney College of the Arts where I received First Class Honours and was offered 2 teaching positions whilst completing my Masters of Visual Arts. If it had not of been my initial opportunity to trial visual arts at TAFE (and it was then as it is now, financially unaffordable and therefore inaccessible to most) I would never have discovered my potential as a creative visual artist with unlimited potential that would have otherwise lay dormant. I now find that the Department of Visual Arts at (RIT) where I started my career, is now under the classification of being unviable as a vocation and is now a full fee paying course. I would never have been able to afford that as I'm sure many cannot and therefore will not persue a career in the Arts and I believe our community and this country will be worse off for it as art is an important component of our society, it gives a voice to people who would otherwise not have one. The effects of funding cuts within the Arts in a regional area where art schools, studios and galleries are not as accessible as in metropolitan areas will be devastating. The ramifications will effect the amount of teaching staff to be employed, the absence of opportunities to create a sense of community through gallery exhibitions and greatly reduces the social contact within a smaller community, I foresee it will effect local art supply stores and the general well being of our community. Many events will be lost and people will be forced to re-locate to city areas to find alternatives when looking to study. This is an adverse effect on regional Australia and is directly opposed to the re-location grant to entice people out of metropolitan areas and into regional ones — why would you move to a place with no art, no art gallery, no vibrant cultural interests and no vocational courses other than hairdressing or panel beating? Is this really how we want to treat Regional Australia, it is already struggling, give us our Arts Funding and let's enjoy the diversity of what it will bring to this country and its economy!

Kind regards,

Catrina Huie