



Written submission to
The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs
for the
Recommendations relating to the
Economic and Fiscal Update Act, 2020 and the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on
certain sectors of the economy
August 2020

Submitted by

Susan Taylor

Executive Director

Kawartha Art Gallery (formerly The Lindsay Gallery Inc.)

190 Kent Street West, Lindsay ON K9V 3S9

PHONE: 705-324-1780

EMAIL: art@kawarthagallery.com

About Kawartha Art Gallery

The year 2021 will mark the 45th anniversary of Kawartha Art Gallery, a registered not for profit public Art Gallery situated in Lindsay, Ontario in the region of the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Governed by a volunteer Board of Governors and managed by an Executive Director the Gallery is the only not for profit public Art Gallery in an area of 3,084.38 km² or 3,300 miles, serving 24 rural villages and towns and their surrounding communities.

The Gallery offers free admission to a calendar of monthly exhibits with a programming focus on providing affordable and accessible programming for all youth. The Gallery is also the steward of a collection of over 200 pieces of Canadian art and sculpture on behalf of the citizens of the City of Kawartha Lakes, with membership in the Ontario Association of Art Galleries, the Ontario Museum Association and the Peterborough/Kawartha Museum Network.

The Gallery wishes to thank the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs for both their work to strengthen our province's economy and for providing this opportunity for the Gallery to speak to the struggles that the cultural sector of small rural communities' face.

Executive Summary

“Arts, culture and heritage is not a special interest group, unless a \$25 billion economy and 300,000 jobs are considered of special interest.”¹

Public art galleries and art museums are an integral part of Ontario’s visual arts sector and hold a key role in the province’s economy. They are part of Ontario’s arts and culture industry, which represents \$25 billion or approximately 3.3 percent of the province’s GDP.² The sector employs approximately 300,000 cultural workers or 4.3% of the province’s labour force.³ In 2016 visitor spending at cultural tourism destinations was over \$1.8 million dollars in the Kawartha Lakes, and over \$6 million dollars on retail product. That is significant in a community that has lost much of its manufacturing base over the years. Prior to COVID-19, 4.5 million Ontarians visited an art gallery or art museum every year.⁴ Kawartha Art Gallery sees over 8,000 visitors a year, however, in a recent study by Business of the Arts, less than a third of those individuals are likely to immediately return to an art gallery even though deemed safe by health regulations, with many others choosing to wait longer for a vaccine before they will return.⁵

Kawartha Art Gallery receives no municipal funding and due to its size and limited staffing due to its financial challenges, is not eligible for funding through Ontario Arts Council or The Canada Council for the Arts. As reported by OAAG, currently less than half (48%) of the Ontario Association of Art Galleries membership receive Ontario Arts Council funding for project, operating or other.

¹ Mayor Andy Letham, City of Kawartha Lakes, May 2019

² “Provincial and Territorial Culture Indicators.2017” Statistics Canada, 25 April 2019

³ “Artists in Canada’s Provinces and Territories in 2016”, Hill Strategies, 27 November 2019

⁴ “Canadians Arts, Culture, and Heritage Participation in 2016,” Hill Strategies, 14 November 2018

⁵ “Arts Response Tracking Study,” Business/Arts with national Arts Centre and Nanos, May 2020

Due to the focus of our area tourism organization, RTO8, to support and invest in regional tourism projects, the proposed projects of the cultural sector of the City of Kawartha Lakes are all too often considered ineligible for funding due to a restrictive funding criterion. Unless a cultural organization in the City of Kawartha Lakes has an event with a proven track record or a regional focus, funding is not available.

Rural galleries then need to go into their communities to fund their events through community sponsorships and donations. Our rural communities should not have to pay for their cultural tourism while more urban communities are supported through government funds.

Long before COVID-19, the realities of the lack of size, staffing and operational funding of small cultural organizations only worked to ensure that small organizations would be denied access to apply for provincial and federal funding because we do not, and will never, wear the same size boots as our larger area counterparts.

Appreciating the under developed value within their cultural tourism sector the municipal government of the City of Kawartha Lakes invested in cultural staffing and partnered with our area Arts Council, of which Kawartha Art Gallery is a member remains a lead advocate for and of the partnership, to develop increased opportunities towards building a cultural tourism driven economy for the increased financial well-being of our community.

COVID-19 has seriously impacted our community, a community that due to being determined an economically depressed area prior to COVID-19 was eligible for the Basic Income Plan, and all investment considerations regarding our area cultural tourism sector is now on hold as the focus needs to be on our community's overall recovery.

Kawartha Art Gallery and the other cultural organizations of our community want to be able to survive so that we can work to contribute to our community's economic recovery but if the disparity between the responses to rural and urban organizations is not addressed, the small cultural organizations in Kawartha Lakes will not be shutting their doors because they cannot adapt and meet the required changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they will be shutting their doors because of the being overlooked by disconnected elitist attitudes and judgements within the levels of decision-making.

Kawartha Art Gallery - Recommendations

- Recommendation 1:

That the government implement the following recommendations as presented by the Ontario Association of Art Galleries;

- Resilience Grants
 - Subsidies for Reopening Costs
 - A Digital Assets Fund
 - Increasing Ontario Arts Council funding by \$20M
 - Create an Arts Education Tax Credit for Families
 - Provide Marketing Assistance
-

- Recommendation 2:

That the government in implementing \$20M in increased funding to the Ontario Arts Council consult with rural municipalities and their representatives to develop and implement a funding model with a criterion that small rural galleries can meet.

- Recommendation 3:

That the government in implementing marketing assistance invest funding directly into the Tourism and Economic Development departments of rural municipalities for funding to restore and strengthen the economies of their specific communities.

Kawartha Art Gallery - Conclusion

While this pandemic has turned our lives upside down it has created an opportunity to become strategic and build funding systems that create opportunities for all cultural organizations and create an opportunity for rural municipalities to invest and grow cultural tourism economic drivers specific to the needs of their communities.

It is our responsibility to create legacies that will take the next generation to a level we could only imagine, and planning is critical to success in every facet of our lives.

Strategic cultural investment offers an opportunity for all communities to create a roadmap unique to their needs, aspirations and strengths. By the provincial government planning strategically to invest in the small rural communities of Ontario, our local government and our cultural groups will be able to work together to integrate arts and culture into the recovery of our community from COVID-19.

Thank you

CONTACT

Susan Taylor

Executive Director

Kawartha Art Gallery

art@kawarthagallery.com