National Cultural Policy Submission

Submitted: On behalf of an arts peak body

What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you?

First Nations

Regional arts infrastructures that would support 'alternative' narratives

A Place for Every Story

Regional arts (particularly, music) infrastructures for 'alternative' voices; lack of avenues for experimental or unconventional music genres, such as hip-hop or indie practices by non-Western (visible) migrant youth; a lack of nexus between the arts and migration settlement policies, in which arts can be another professional pathway in Australia; the voices of non-Western migrants in regional areas, despite their high artistic and cultural skills; have not been heard due to the lack of policy frameworks. As a result, we lose a regional art potential from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

The Centrality of the Artist

Migrant artists (musicians) in regional areas need special support as they do not participate in offered grant or project opportunities due to the lack of skills, trust and knowledge. Pathways for penetrating regional arts need to be created, as at this moment there are issues of social and economic inequality in accessing and participating in the (regional) arts sector. Also, migrant arts exist within the realm and responsibility of multicultural policies, not Arts policies, which create unnecessary divisions between audiences and artists.

Strong Institutions

At this moment, there is no nexus between regional arts, migration and regional development policies. However, regional migrant communities have an incredible potential to contribute to the regional arts sector and regional cultural development and production, which, in turn has multiple benefits (regional tourism attraction, social connectedness, etc).

Regional arts institutions need to develop an inclusive strategy to utilise migrant cultural capital – i.e. by: creating regular places for migrant arts; regular activities, engagement of migrant communities in the local art processes; creating intercultural products (not just for migrant communities' use, but for a broader audiences); multicultural educational art initiatives (learning music/understanding multicultural arts, etc).

The biggest issue for regional migrant representation is the absence of regular, daily presence of their arts, which often is down to places (infrastructures) for culturally 'alternative' music practices. However, it doesn't necessarily mean that new places need to be created; it means that regional art places can be rethought accordingly to a multicultural framework.

Reaching the Audience

Again (as my focus is on migrant regional arts) – this segment of audience and their cultural capital mostly is unknown and exists only on grass-roots basis (migrant artists create their groups on social media, connect with their communities globally).

Many groups report issues with recording and accessing media (radio and others) and in some cases, migrant artists can receive an acknowledgement abroad (e.g., young hip-hop artists in the US) but still not be known in Australia.

Perhaps, we need a national inventory for regional migrant artists and strategies of their engagement into local and national media sphere.

Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why.

A Place for Every Story
I can testify that regional migrant arts expressions are a missing segment of regional arts policies and equally, regional migration policies. Arts (music) are utilised by migrants on a grass-roots level as a practice of settlement (practice of belonging, social inclusion). We risk missing migrant contributions to the regional arts, as their cultural capital is not exactly acknowledged; therefore, migrants tend to choose jobs/activities outside the arts sector. It is especially a big issue for migrant youth. This is a missed opportunity for diversifying regional cultural life and lifestyle and, generally, benefiting from Australian cultural diversity.

Are there any other things that you would like to see in a National Cultural Policy?

My 3.5 years PhD research gathered an information about migrant regional settlement experiences and the roles of music in them. I would love to share this knowledge and contribute to the regional aspects of National Cultural Policy in designing migrant-related policies and strategies.