

National Cultural Policy Submission

Cara-Ann Simpson

As a worker/professional in an industry who uses arts (e.g. art therapist, tour guide)

As an artist

What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you? Feel free to respond to any or all pillars:

First Nations

This pillar is crucial to get right and do well. I support AmaGA's "First Peoples: a roadmap for enhancing Indigenous engagement in museums and galleries" and believe that this should form part of the foundation for this pillar. Aligning with industry roadmaps, best practice and sharing that vision across the industry is vital in supporting organisations, institutions, and individuals to transition to alignment of the goals in AMAGA's roadmap, alongside NAVA's recommendations.

More investment (funding, time and education) is required for the sector to improve practices in response to the inclusion and celebration of First Nations arts. Programs that support Indigenous artists and businesses to grow sustainable incomes and broaden networks will help the broader sector. Cultural tourism has incredible potential in Australia, but needs driving support and opportunities to help individual artists and businesses thrive.

A Place for Every Story

I agree with NAVA's recommendations, that this isn't really its own pillar. Storytelling is vital, however combining these many communities, cultures and identities into a singular 'pillar' means that there is a high risk of diluting opportunities, lesser progress, and less meaningful outcomes.

This should be separated out into more specific pillars that identify major issues within Australia's sociocultural landscape.

For me personally, I hope to see much more investment in opportunities and support for artists and arts workers with disability. This investment should look towards funding, building sustainable incomes, career development, and addressing barriers. Working in the arts with a disability is still a major barrier, which in many other industries has been addressed in recent years. I personally feel that the arts in Australia are far behind other countries in terms of making arts accessible, and supporting artists and arts workers with disability to reach their potential.

The Centrality of the Artist

I support NAVA's workshop recommendations, and agree that the arts sector requires more thought and consideration as an industry including industrial reform, industrial award rates, basic income schemes, superannuation and Centrelink reform.

The Centrality of the Artist has the risk of becoming a nominal pillar, rather than using it as an opportunity for industry wide reform and assessment. It is easy to say that the artist is central, but without reform that just looks like a pat on the back.

Strong Institutions

Again, I support NAVA's workshop recommendations and need for industrial reform.

I would like to see the establishment of a national accreditation system implemented for Museums and Galleries that use the National Standards as a minimum guide. There is significant potential in an accreditation system to improve the sector at a national level by implementing a system that aims for best practice across management, operations, these pillars, and education. Additional accreditation modules across public programming, education, curation and interpretation would provide a robust structure to support the growth of the sector and make Australia's industry competitive at a global level.

Reaching the Audience

Again, I support NAVA's workshop recommendations. I would like to see Visions of Australia become more accessible to individual artists, and support collaborative relationships between artists and galleries. I believe there is more scope for Visions of Australia to also act as an intermediary between linking artists and institutions/organisations.

Further, I often am unable to access opportunities due to being in a regional area that has limited internet offerings and weak phone signal. This needs to be addressed so that regional and remote artists have maximised opportunities to connect and engage with their audience.

Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why. Feel free to respond to any or all that are applicable to you:

A Place for Every Story

As an artist and arts worker living with disability, I have struggled to obtain opportunities that support my access needs and limitations. I believe that there needs to be better support for artists living with disability, outside of disability arts organisations. I don't want to always be labelled as a 'disabled artist', and believe that additional investment from government at all levels will support the normalisation of artists living with disability to create, participate and LEAD.

The Centrality of the Artist

Australia still exists in a place where paying for artists is considered a luxury. So often have I encountered no or insignificant 'honorariums' for my work and contributions to the sector. It is time for reform to pay artists the right way, and pay for their specialised skills and expertise.

Strong Institutions

As someone who has worked in the arts, cultural and heritage sectors, I am passionate about the need for continual improvement and aiming to meet best practice. Institutions are only as good as their teams, and regional institutions require more support, access to low cost or free training, and assistance from bigger institutions to improve their practices and structures.

I would like to see a 'buddy' system developed where larger institutions partner with smaller regional organisations to build collaboration relationships, and support the growth of individual arts workers.

Reaching the Audience

It's hard to reach an audience when you are isolated both due to geography and dis/ability. Reaching my audience is so important to build my practice, develop a sustainable income, and to create a space for my practice in the national arts scene. I have often found that communities remain clinging to an age of nepotism, where specific art school education is of the utmost importance, and 'outsiders' are not always welcomed to access opportunities and networks. This requires significant cultural change in the way people approach the arts, and to put accessibility in front of class attributes.