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ARTS ACCESS VICTORIA

New National Cultural Policy

Arts Access Victoria's vision is cultural equity for Deaf and Disabled people. Our purpose is to lead transformational and systemic change that benefits all Deaf and Disabled people.

In July and August 2022, Arts Access Victoria asked Deaf and Disabled people what they wanted in a New Cultural Policy.

The artists and audiences we work with told us, 'Art matters.' 'We want our own voice, why can't we speak for ourselves?'

Almost 20% of the Australian population is Deaf or Disabled. Disability effects everyone. We either are, or one day may become, disabled.

We want our arts and culture to reflect this. We want Deaf and Disabled people to have equal access to creating, participating and experiencing arts and culture.

We know that this National Cultural Policy won't address all the systemic barriers that Deaf and Disabled people face. That there are high numbers of First Nations and Deaf and Disabled people incarcerated and institutionalized. That Deaf and Disabled people are less employed, more likely to live in poverty, or paid Australian Disability Enterprise wages. That Deaf and Disabled people don't get the same access to education. That there are fewer health and community supports for regional and remote Australians.

We call on the Federal Government to commence a radical overhaul of systems that entrench this inequality.

We want to ensure that no - one is left behind.

Arts Access Victoria has developed the following priority areas for the New National Cultural Policy.

First Nations first: recognising and respecting the crucial place of these stories at the centre of our arts and culture.

- We want Deaf and Disabled First Nations people supported in federal funding programs and represented in decision making.
- We want Deaf First Nations artists supported with access to culturally appropriate interpretation services and support.
- We want the NDIS to better integrate artmaking and accessing art experiences, to encourage and support First Nations Deaf and Disabled artists.
- We want First Nations Deaf and Disabled artists given increased access to artmaking and art programs when in institutional settings. We acknowledge the systemic injustices against First Nations people and overrepresentation of Deaf and Disabled First Nations people in prisons.

A place for every story: reflecting the diversity of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.

- We want storytelling to reflect the Australian population. Ensure 20% of storytelling is by Deaf and Disabled people, mandated for all federal arts funding avenues, Australia Council for the Arts, Office of the Arts, Screen Australia, National Collecting Institutions and Major Performing Arts Organisations.
- We want Deaf and Disabled people represented in all peer assessment panels and sector development leadership initiatives at all institutions.
- We want new authentic stories supported, that are incentivized so the risk is removed for presenters, who are tempted to program traditional or canonical stories that do not fairly represent Deaf and Disabled people.
- We want young people and children to be given equal access to the arts in education, including students in segregated educational settings.

The centrality of the artist: supporting the artist as worker and celebrating their role as the creators of culture.

- We want significant ringfenced funding for Deaf and Disabled artists to grow careers and ensure Deaf and Disabled storytelling reflects our culture.
- We want the Australia Council for the Arts funding restored to 2013 levels at a minimum (increased for inflation) and RISE funding redirected to the Australia Council for the Arts.
- We want the National Arts and Disability Initiative expanded to a greater number of recipients, and to focus on growing new voices.
- We want non-targeted funding programs to be more accessible, and remove barriers to application and delivery, including consideration of 'crip time'.
- We want arts organisations supported to ensure artists and artworkers are paid a livable wage.

Strong institutions: providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts and culture.

- We want all government funded opportunities to include a mandatory access line in every budget.
- We want the next generation of Deaf and Disabled leaders supported through federal programs.
- We want greater investment in disability- led arts – knowing Deaf and Disabled people are the best placed to lead and develop the sector for Deaf and Disabled people.
- We want increased support to small – medium arts organisations, who overwhelmingly support Deaf and Disabled artists work over major organisations.
- We want all federally funded institutions to have quotas in place for Deaf and Disabled workforce.

Reaching the audience: ensuring our stories reach the right people at home and abroad.

- We want no one to be left behind – that digital access is prioritized so all presenters livestream or provide digital art experiences on demand.
- We want sector upskilling to ensure accessibility is central to the arts sector, and not provided in an ad hoc or add on way.
- We want low- cost initiatives for audiences on low incomes so that they can attend all arts.
- We want young Deaf and Disabled audiences are supported to access the arts, especially in regional and remote locations.