

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Introduction

The arts, entertainment and creative industries have suffered for a decade under the Coalition Government and on top of that, were the first and hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis. Overnight, many artists and crews lost their entire income. This came after a catastrophic bushfire season that shut down festivals and events, and was followed by devastating floods which did the same. Australia must invest in our art, stories and music. It's who we are. The Greens would like to see strong investment in our culture, stories, arts and live music with long-term funding arrangements, to create secure well paid jobs. Investing in the creation of Australian stories for local audiences ensures we all get the chance to see ourselves reflected on our screens, stages and in our galleries. Telling stories enriches our lives with meaning, and it's critical we invest in the people to deliver it. The Greens welcome the Federal Government's development of a National Cultural Policy and the opportunity to contribute to this consultation.

Establish a Creativity Commission

The future economy will require 'soft-skills' – that means we need a society equipped to understand and benefit from the creative sector. The Greens propose the establishment of a \$10 million a year fund, for a multi-disciplinary Creativity Commission to provide advocacy, advice and structural support to the creative sector and beyond. The Creativity Commission will support the growth of the creative economy while also building our creative capacities and ideas to inform policy, initiatives and industry. A Creativity Commission will help us transition from STEM thinking to STEAM thinking by integrating the creativity, usually reserved for the arts, throughout the economy and society. The Greens understand that the future will require investment in creativity and innovation, not just 'hard skills' in science, technology, engineering and maths, and the Creativity Commission will help create and sustain those integrated pathways.

An artist in residence in every school and library

Arts and creativity are an essential part of education and our communities. The establishment of a program for an artist in residence in every school and library in the country would enable young artists in particular, to engage their skills while helping to mentor young Australians and students. Artists and authors would support schools or local councils to create community art projects in local areas, whether that is street art, theatre or music productions, local exhibitions and local stories. This project is focused on job creation, community development and building an enhanced appreciation for creative industries.

An artist's wage program

It is often hard for artists to access stable income, which was only made worse throughout the pandemic with the cancellation of live events across the country. A pilot program called the Artists Wage would provide stability for artists. If established, this program would pay a minimum wage for up to 10,000 established or emerging artists for a full calendar year. This wage will ensure artists are able to create without added pressures of living costs, and can give back to the economy through the work they create. Versions of the Artists Wage are already operational in countries around the world. Intermittence du Spectacle is the French wage guarantee and has been operational since 1936. The Artists Wage proposal recognises the foundational spirit of Intermittence de Spectacle, but is conceived largely around the new Irish version, a pilot program of fixed payments for artists called 'Basic Income for the Arts'.

A properly funded and independent Australia Council

The Australia Council, the peak government funding and advisory body for the arts has seen its funding dramatically reduced from pre-2013 levels by the Coalition Government. This has disproportionately affected small and medium arts organisations. Covid support has been provided through money handed out by the Minister's office, rather than through the independent Council. The Greens propose a doubling of funding to the Australia Council to ensure that they are able to provide the strategic funding, advice and support for the arts and entertainment industry as it recovers from the widespread impacts of the Covid pandemic. The Australia Council has been used as a political punching bag by successive Liberal arts ministers. The independence of the Australia Council, free of political appointments and cronyism, must be protected.

Invest in Australian stories on our screens

Covid lockdowns around the world have provided some exciting opportunities for Australia to host major international productions of movies and television. This has often come at the expense of telling our own stories. It has meant that lower budget local productions are competing with Hollywood scale productions for local crews, studio space and equipment. There must be strong investment in our local screen industry, which the Greens propose should include establishing a \$1 billion 'Australian Stories Fund' to fund the infrastructure, crew training and development needs of the local industry. This investment would ensure that once the Hollywood 'sugar-hit' is over, there is a robust and sustainable local industry able to keep creating high quality Australian content. Under this plan there would also be investment in our local documentary industry to ensure that they can keep doing the important work of documenting our history, culture and stories to share both in Australia and around the world.

Regulating the global streaming giants

Australian stories on our screens are essential in shaping our national identity and reflecting the diversity of our community. At the height of the Covid crisis, the Morrison Government reduced

the requirements for free-to-air TV broadcasters to air Australian content, in particular children's TV. The result of this has been devastating to children's TV. The Greens propose legislating local content quotas on streaming video on demand services that operate in Australia. Netflix, Disney, Amazon Prime, Stan and many other streaming services are growing in popularity in Australia and making hundreds of millions of dollars from Australian audiences. As more people are getting their screen content online rather than through traditional broadcasting channels it is essential that we see Australian stories told on our screens. The Greens propose the legislation should require streaming services to invest 20 per cent of the money they earn from Australian subscribers to be spent on the production of Australian content. It's incredibly important that our kids see themselves and their communities represented in the television that they watch. The Greens propose a sub-quota of 20 percent of the local content created by streaming services to be for the production of children's content.

Live Performance Fund

The live performance sector is central to our culture and our economy and it is critical we invest in its recovery after being hit so hard by Covid lockdowns and climate-induced catastrophes, as well as its growth into the future. The Greens are calling for the establishment of a Live Performance Fund to invest in Australia's festival, music and live performance sector. This fund would be an opportunity to stimulate the economy and put people back into work in an industry that is job rich, and will reap benefits for communities across the country. Local tourism, hospitality and retail also benefit greatly, along with local construction jobs for those projects that require infrastructure.

Save the ABC and SBS

The ABC has been cut by almost 1,000 jobs and more than \$783 million since Tony Abbott went to the 2013 election promising no cuts to the ABC. We are seeing attacks on the independence of the ABC from political appointees. Meanwhile, SBS is under attack from commercial stations trying to undermine its ability to serve its audience. The ABC and SBS are cultural cornerstones of our national life.

The Greens believe every dollar cut from the ABC's budget by the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government since 2013 should be restored, and the ABC's funding grown year-on-year to account for those years of chronic underfunding. The ABC Act should be amended to create a standing appropriation — funding of the ABC would be law, and not subject to the whim of the government of the day. This would help recover the jobs lost and restore and protect the news-breaking ability of our nation's public media across the country.

Placing ABC iView and SBS On Demand behind a paywall should be ruled out and advertising on SBS should be phased out. The Coalition Government has tried to expand the number of advertisements SBS can carry, as a pretext for cutting its funding. But every advertisement makes it harder for SBS to fulfil its charter obligations. It compromises the independence of the

public broadcaster when it is forced to rely on commercial sponsorship to stay afloat. Public broadcasters shouldn't rely on private income to keep the lights on.

An independent ABC

The ABC is under attack from more than just funding cuts. The politicisation of the board has never been more evident. There needs to be a clear, non-partisan process for selecting the board. Editorial independence of the ABC should be secured in legislation. This should include: Protect the Nomination Panel by legislating a role for them rather than relying on protocol; Require board nominees to come before the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications in addition to being referred to the Minister; Require the Minister to explain in-writing to the Standing Committee the rejection of any nominee recommended by the panel; Give the Standing Committee power to recommend the Chair to the Minister; and in addition to a staff-appointed board member, introduce an audience-appointed board member, reflecting the role of ABC viewers as the critical stakeholder in our public broadcaster. The new board processes will ensure that the board is independent and filled with the best candidates with relevant skills, experience and expertise.

Pandemic and disaster insurance for live events

Since the Covid pandemic and an increase in climate-induced catastrophes, it has been increasingly difficult and expensive for the live performance industry to obtain insurance. It is impossible for live events to get pandemic insurance to cover cancellations or reductions in venue capacity at short notice. Over the past two years we have seen the cancellation of hundreds of events from festivals to concerts and exhibitions. As the climate crisis gets worse the Australian live events sector will continue to feel the brunt of extreme weather events like bushfires, heatwaves and flooding. A specific insurance response is required, underwritten by the federal government.

There is a market failure in the insurance industry and it's up to the Government to step in and underwrite insurance for live events. The Greens proposed a live performance insurance guarantee in the last parliament, similar to the model that has been operating successfully in the screen industry for more than a year now and was recently extended. Under this fund, live events that are cancelled due to Covid or an extreme weather event, will be eligible to have their costs covered by the fund. This will bring certainty back to the industry and allow the planning of live events without taking on huge financial risk.

Arts education and our creative institutions

Arts education has been under threat for a long time, from school curriculums to tertiary studies, private studios and technical colleges. It has been neglected, suffered funding cuts by the Federal Government and hit by the impact of Covid and the loss of students and ability to teach. We've seen a lack of prioritisation of arts and cultural education and financial stress on our institutions. Arts rich education should not be seen as a luxury but rather integral to

development, creativity and expression, and academic success. We must ensure arts education is available, affordable and open to a steady pipeline of practising artists in every state and territory in the country. The arts must be integral to school curriculums and students must be able to see the pathways to careers in the arts. These pathways must be maintained and funded for all disciplines from drama (theatre, tv, screen production), visual arts, dance, and music. The government should also ensure the future viability of creative educational institutions with long-term funding support.

Invest in our video game development industry

Video games are significant culturally, artistically and economically. They help shape young minds, tell stories, and form part of our artistic landscape, bridging and feeding into other artistic communities and mediums. We must have Australian voices and stories conveyed through video games and invest in Australian artists for our industry to grow and thrive. The video games industry is the fastest-growing entertainment industry in the world, worth \$138 billion a year worldwide. In Australia alone, this industry generates over \$3 billion in retail revenue and Australian game development studios earn almost \$120 million per year. In 2013, a \$20 million Australian Interactive Games Fund was introduced, which Tony Abbott subsequently cut in the 2014 Budget. The Greens believe \$100 million should be committed to a new Games Investment & Enterprise Fund, to invest in game development projects and to help successful games companies grow their businesses. This fund would include initiatives for diversity and inclusion.

Musician's minimum performance fee

COVID and the subsequent rolling lockdowns decimated the live music industry. Not only did many musicians lose work, they were also largely ineligible for the JobKeeper payment. The little federal government support provided under the RISE scheme is now being phased out and there is no additional funding or support provided in the recent federal budget. To provide stability for musicians, the Greens propose a minimum performance fee for artists performing at publicly funded events. This would ensure that live performers are recognised and remunerated for their work, and help provide some stability for artists who lost their entire income during the pandemic. This fee reflects industry standards for payment as determined by industry bodies, and supports the call from key stakeholder, including Musicians Australia and the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance for the Government to uphold the same standards.

Reinstate the Australia Network

Before being cut by the Abbott Government in 2014, the Australia Network broadcast quality Australian content around the world. In doing so, it played a critical role in our diplomacy. Unfortunately, since its disbandment, we have seen a sharp decline in our diplomatic relationships, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. The funding to the Australia Network that was cut by the Abbott Government should be fully restored, to ensure we can share current affairs and Australian content to our regional partners in the Pacific and beyond. This is not only

part of a strategy to ensure our public broadcaster is supported to continue making quality content, but will play into the foreign affairs space, allowing us to share our independent journalism with our partners as a form of diplomatic outreach.

Community broadcasting

Community broadcasters play an important role in strengthening media diversity in Australia. Despite this, they face a great deal of uncertainty thanks to short funding cycles. This compromises their ability to deliver content and produce public interest journalism. The Greens propose that they be given additional surety by guaranteeing future funding for the community broadcasting sector beyond a 12-month funding cycle, locking in five years' worth of funding so these broadcasters can plan adequately. Community radio should be supported with an indexed \$1.4 million in funding for digital transmission, which will support the over 55 metro-wide community radio services across Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart, Darwin and Canberra.

First Nations media

Funding for First Nations media has remained largely stagnant for the last decade despite demand for funding more than doubling as the sector has grown. The Greens recognise the importance of our First Nations media and the significance of having access to stories told by and for First Nations communities. There should be an increase and indexation to the annual funding for First Nations Media to \$30 million per annum. There should also be a separate broadcaster licence category for First Nations broadcasting and to make the necessary regulatory changes for spectrum allocation and codes of practice. This will prevent First Nations broadcasters from having to compete with community broadcasters for broadcast licences and support the rights of First Nations peoples to establish their own media.

Fake Indigenous art

The profile of Indigenous art has grown tremendously in recent decades. This has resulted in earning and income opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and contributed to both the preservation and dissemination of culture. This rise in awareness and value of Indigenous art has also led to a growing market in fake art and merchandise.

These commercially-produced goods - mostly aimed at the tourist market - are often made from non-traditional materials and feature inauthentic and culturally inappropriate designs. This trade misappropriates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, undermining the role of communities. It denies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists economic and other opportunities as well as deceiving and misleading buyers.

The Greens have previously introduced a bill which would ensure an end to the proliferation of fake Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and art products, and would make it an offence to supply or offer commercial goods to a consumer that include Indigenous cultural expression

unless it is supplied by, or in accordance with a transparent arrangement with an Indigenous artist or relevant Indigenous community. A legislative solution should be pursued.

Conclusion

The Greens appreciate the opportunity to make this submission. We urge the Minister to ensure that this consultation does not become a meaningless activity and rather is a genuine engagement opportunity with a long forgotten sector that has real, tangible results. We also urge the Minister to consider taking actions that would implement urgent recommendations if that is necessary before the completion of the national cultural policy. The arts, entertainment, and cultural sector has suffered so much over the term of the last government and particularly during covid. Further delaying action that has strong support and is necessary to prevent the loss of a generation of artists, or cultural institutions would cause further harm.