

National Cultural Policy Submission

Bronwyn Davies

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

On behalf of an organisation with arts-components (e.g. community organisation, tourism, venue, health, education etc)

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

As an artist

As an individual

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

Support for councils of representatives from local Indigenous groups, elders etc in regions so that correct consultations are made on Indigenous cultural matters. Pathways for development of local knowledge groups. Native title becomes a fracturous within communities and perpetuates dislocation. If there could be another way for community to have representation so that it was easy for non Indigenous groups to liaise with correct people proper way.

Support to local and state governments and institutions to hold or attend cultural awareness training.

Support/paid positions for elders to be part of official welcoming to new residents and migrants to this country and introduce people to Australia Proper way

A Place for Every Story

Explore and invest in ways to tell difficult stories with a focus on healing and reconciliation. This truth telling for Indigenous people, or memorials after disasters, tragedy and wars etc needs to be reviewed so that we use the arts in the storytelling, healing and capacity for communities to go forward. The arts can be central to this healing and needs to be valued and appreciated. The valuing of the arts by establishing wellbeing indicators needs to be addressed URGENTLY. We need to be able to prove the how the arts heals, provides health, education, transformation and expression to all Australians.

The Centrality of the Artist

Creativity will be the key to future development and the artist can have a role in lateral thinking, creative visioning, healing, reconciliation, and development of new technologies. The arts must be returned to the curriculum and be a viable career alternative for young people and linked to real life job opportunities. Community Cultural Development needs to be supported. Process creates pathways to excellence and is an expression of excellence in itself. As a practice CCD work has a unique role in engaging everyday Australians with the arts. CCD training should be linked to roles within Govt, Health and education and positions found at every level of Govt. Artists across all art forms should also have CCD training so that they can have employment in the creative fields in these areas.

Strong Institutions

Non-competitive funding for major state and national companies/institutions after successful endorsement. They then should not be eligible for competitive funding as they should be adequately resourced and have capacity to attract private sponsors. Their funding should not be cut by any government changes.

Tax incentives should be given to people supporting the arts. Funding is elitist and is driven by the whims of this or that Govt and this has had a huge impact on destabilising the arts. If however there was a generous tax deduction provided through some kind of kick starter like platform where people could select projects, festivals or groups they want to support then this would put the power with the people. They would become more connected and more engaged. Projects on the platform would have to go through some kind of checks and balances to be part of preselection so that there was transparency and accountability. If we think laterally about arts funding, we could see a resurgence such as there was in the 70s when there was a boost to the Australian Film Industry.

Reaching the Audience

Support pathways within communities to connect with the arts, through bringing back schools touring (eg Qld Arts Council touring), Use the RADF model for locally determined support for local projects. Support local councils to provide creative services to their communities as we support health and public transport. Tell stories in our public places. Invest in placemaking. Tell local stories in places so that we understand our heritage and identity. Value the unique natural environment through the arts. Celebrate the diversity of cultural backgrounds that make us modern Australians. Honour and find pathways to honour first Australians.

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

First Nations

Always was and always will be Aboriginal Land. We have done such great wrongs in this country to Indigenous peoples. We need to commence the great healing. We have lost so much potential through past transgressions. I have had the honour of working with Indigenous communities in the Scenic Rim and across Queensland. I have worked with Australian South Sea Islanders to commemorate 150 years since they were brought to this country as slaves. The more I know, the less I know. There is so much work to do. Starting with cultural awareness in schools as a mandatory subject could help. Restoring dignity, truth telling...all so important.

A Place for Every Story

Through sharing all stories of place, the evolution of a place, the environment, Indigenous, settler and contemporary stories difficult and proud moments we will better understand each other and have a stronger more compassionate community. Racism is ignorance. Organisations like Peace and Conflict Studies Institute Australia do work across cultures and bring people together so that we become empathic. The arts have a role to play in facilitating stories and shaping a kinder community less focussed on protecting their own backyard. We need to celebrate acts of compassion and community. The ASSI 150 project was a milestone in my professional career. I have seen first-hand how prejudice, ignorance and bigotry can be turned around through proper facilitation and

investment in deep listening. <https://pacsia.com.au/category/project-updates/this-is-our-story/> This was real sharing of story and real reconciliation.

The Centrality of the Artist

I have now returned to my own arts practice after 16 years as Coordinator of Cultural Services for Scenic Rim Regional Council. During that time I have developed Arts and Cultural Policies, Public Art and Artist in Residence Models and guidelines, I produced the first Open Studios Trail in Qld, Fires on Top of Mountains Commonwealth Games cultural program for the Scenic Rim and Arts Ablaze the Regional Arts Conference for Queensland. I have been an assessor for Regional Arts Fund, Arts Queensland and RADF. I have been on advisory panels at a state level and participated in various sector development initiatives. Before my work in Local Govt I was ran Club Zamia which presented world music performances from around the world, I directed arts festivals, was a cultural development worker with young people, worked as a graphic designer, an editor, writer and more. Regional artists need to be supported. City living is too expensive, rents have become exorbitant and the income of artists is too low to sustain a practice in most parts of Australia unless we think laterally about pathways. Subsidise housing for artist, provide access to studio space. Showcase opportunities for regional artists in cities. Bring back the arts in TAFE. Bring back hands on learning rather than academic arts which is losing connection to so many. Bring back skills that can be used and seen daily in people's lives. Provide incentives for support for the arts. Now as a full-time practicing artist I am fortunate to have the skills from a life in administration to support my arts business. I make my living from hosting my own exhibitions. If there were incentives for people to invest in the arts it would be very helpful. I am flat out in my community contributing to organisations because they value my experience and creative input. I think we need to value that like we value the lawyer, the doctor or the plumber!

Strong Institutions

I have run cultural centres, worked with heritage museums, local artists, galleries, theatres. Places are only relevant when they engage and connect with people and build community. It is the people who work in the institutions that make them sing. We need to invest in the people who work behind the scenes, the technicians, the ushers, the ticket sellers, the volunteers, the creatives....they are the unsung heroes not the building. So proper resourcing of programs with a view to correct sustainability over the long term and ways to grow...so important.

Reaching the Audience

Share stories, build pride, uncover the amazing and unique history of our country. Why we live where we live, our values not our fears, not jingoism, but connection to place, to country to community. We need to be authentic. I keep saying CCD is the answer and this is not community engagement which so often is just marketing communication rather than real connection and relevance to community

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

THINKING LATERALLY

- What if instead of being reliant on govt arts departments and the will of the govt of the day we had the opportunity to fund arts projects and get a tax deduction for doing so? This approach was taken in the 1970s in Australia and lead to the boom in the Australian Film Industry.

- a platform like crowd funding could be developed (with the requisite checks and measures in place to ensure no fraudulent claims) that listed arts and cultural projects under themes where you could scroll through and find something you supported and make a pledge which would be tax deductible
- What if artists were paid a living wage to create as they are in parts Europe? [Ireland has just introduced a pilot scheme where 2000 artists receive a living wage of 300 Euros a week for 3 years.](#)
- what if all schools had artists in residence for each grade?
- what if we promoted youth arts engagement and success as strongly as we promoted engagement with sport? Giving support to local arts clubs to run classes for young children?
- what if Indigenous elders were venerated and supported and had residencies in schools and had a formal role in welcoming and instructing new migrants to Australia
- what if we ran cultural awareness as a core subject in schools and a qualifying certificates for employment?
- what if arts degrees didn't cost as much as medical degrees
- what if you could study arts and culture at TAFE
- What if there was a national membership based organization for everyone working in the arts- of all kind and at all levels... that would be pretty powerful
- what if artists in residence opportunities were available in the work place
- what if we understood the the arts and the power to express
- what if we had artists trained in cultural development, cultural awareness and working in hospitals, gaols and other places?
- what if arts touring to regional centres and schools was part of the curriculum provided to all Australians
- surely if we think laterally we can come up with better more equitable solutions than are currently available
- what if we understood that when Covid hit so many artists lost their income and yet it was the arts to which people turned as they binged on netflix and podcasts.