

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Submitted: 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:

A Place for Every Story

ISSUE – GEOGRAPHIC BLINDNESS OF POLICY.

THE CHALLENGE: At a National level, Arts institutions, policy and programming exhibit a passionate disinterest of the west coast of the Nation. Specifically, WA is absent from National thinking, and this weakens the National position.

This is evident in the absence of west coast narratives in national arts publications (eg, WA coverage is generally absent in major visual Arts publications), institutional policy frameworks (eg, no west coast acknowledgement in DITRDCA policy frameworks ... not even a west coast 'town hall' event in this policy consultation process at the time of making this submission), institutional practice (eg, and as one example of many, WA is generally absent from major exhibitions, surveys or prizes. For instance, no West Australian has ever won the Archibald in its history, and is rarely represented).

THE OPPORTUNITY: The National Cultural Policy is requested to address and advocate for a geographically balanced coverage in visual arts frameworks. This may require affirmative geographic action, similar to that which is gradually and rightfully seeing gender and diversity become more fairly represented in Arts discourse. Specific policy levers should include:

- Reframing DITRDCA National Cultural Policy to clearly acknowledge and support the west coast. This may need deliberate priority and focus in order to overcome the years of 'neglect' from a National perspective.
- Linking regional (west coast) coverage as a KPI for National funding applications for institutions, publications and programs (eg, KPIs for NAVA funding and similar).
- Advocating to Federal Government to affirmatively increase support and funding for west coast institutions, and
- Advocating to Federal Government for a strong and affirmative focus on west coast arts coverage in National ABC broadcasting and media.

The Centrality of the Artist

ISSUE – COLLABORATION RATHER THAN SILOS.

THE CHALLENGE: From a practitioner's perspective, the centrality of the artist' is leading to many artists operating in isolation from a wider industry and other sectors, rather than the artist being a 'valued collaborator'. Part of this thinking appears to be a legacy of outdated of Arts training, which typically prepares artists for a 'bubble or silo praxis' within a the narrow arts sector. Most artists are unfamiliar with potential collaborators,

facilitators and enablers on other sectors such as tourism, property, retail, etc, within which artists can make a significant contribution, and find major sources of funding. As a consequence, and while the Arts sector is contracting due to disruption, artists appear unable to navigate their way to new opportunities because they fail to understand the way other sectors work.

THE OPPORTUNITY: The National Cultural Policy should advocate for improved training within Arts degrees that introduces artists to wider collaborative opportunities in sectors outside traditional arts, and in partnership with non-arts sectors, and to 'place more levers' in the hands of artists. This could be linked to funding.

Strong Institutions

ISSUE – REMOVING BARIERS TO THE ARTS MARKET.

THE CHALLENGE: All Arts institutions have suffered in the last decade. Funding for public and publicly supported institutions and programs has contracted. Even worse, financial barriers have decimated the private sector (Arts Market) which now struggles to support itself, the artists it represents, and artists who rely on a healthier market and audience generally.

Specifically, **Tax rulings** which generally prevented the acquisition of Art for super funds and investment, which in turn led to the failing viability of commercial galleries (-in Perth, approximately 6 commercial galleries failed and closed in the last decade, partly caused by the suddenly contracting market after the Tax rulings came into operation). Consequently, artists have been left without gallery representation, and no longer enjoy access to professional resources/buyers/etc. The alternatives confronting artists of exhibiting through institutional and community galleries typically delivers poor sales if any, which in turn fails to support the artists livelihood, and resulting in greater reliance on funding for support and handouts.

This could be redressed, not by funding, but by restoring the health of the Art market.

Separately, the previous Policy's reliance on promoting philanthropic support for the sector has failed, and immediate refocus is required.

THE OPPORTUNITY: That DITRDCA directly, and through its National Cultural Policy strongly lobbies Federal Government to remove tax ruling barriers to the acquisition of art. This is a low-cost action to Government in comparison to requests for increased funding, and will prevent the further contraction of Arts Markets and audiences. If there is one thing that DITRDCA needs to achieve in the coming period, it's the removal of these tax rulings.

Reaching the Audience

ISSUE – ARTS MEDIA COVERAGE HAS CONTRACTED AND FAILS TO REACH A WIDE AUDIENCE

THE CHALLENGE: Arts is a 'long tail' sector. With the exception of popular Arts programming, our target audience represents perhaps one in a hundred people, and buyers even less. Social media provides no support for reaching audiences due to its algorithms. Ironically, traditional media manages to reach a sufficiently deep proportion of

the public to connect with audience of adequate size (ie, say a reach of 100,000 for a newspaper compared with an actual reach of 100 for social media, after algorithms have contracted the reach of posts. The reach is of course far greater for electronic media such as radio or television.)

THE OPPORTUNITY: DITRDCA, with the support of the National Cultural Policy must advocate to Federal Government to increase its coverage of the Arts, commensurate with its obligation under the ABC Charter. In particular:

- The ABC should introduce regular Arts programming to its daily News and Current Affairs
- The ABC should increase its production of Arts content generally (eg utilise one of its channels for substantial Arts content), and
- The ABC should transcend the tyranny of geographic distance by reaching out to arts practitioners (such on the West Coast) via electronic means (eg, interviews via Zoom)

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

ISSUE - A PLACE TO PRACTICE –

THE CHALLENGE: The National Cultural Policy is relatively silent on mechanisms and support to deliver on the provision of space for a diversity of Arts practices. As an example, a recent survey of creatives in Perth's inner area was responded to by 1,080 practitioners, of whom over 85% required space. Similar surveys elsewhere constantly reveal the provision of space as one of the most significant issues for the sector, but is relatively absent from the National Cultural Policy. The delivery of space (studios, hubs, performance, galleries, theatres, rehearsal, etc) is a complex issue, and requires the manipulation of many levers including funding, public/private partnerships, Planning frameworks, legislative support, etc. Due to the complexity, the State and Local Governments frequently fail to play an active role in delivery of space.

THE OPPORTUNITY: The National Cultural Policy, where it influences funding grants to State and Local Governments, should establish prerequisites or KPIs for applicants (State and LGAs) to demonstrate they have a pro-active Cultural Infrastructure Strategy in place, and a commitment to deliver spaces under that strategy.