

2022 national cultural policy submission

pvi collective

16/08/22

about pvi collective

founded in 1998 and based on whadjuk noongar boodja, western australia, pvi collective is a tactical media art group who create participatory artworks intent on the creative disruption of everyday life. pvi use gameplay alongside emerging, familiar and diy technology to explore creative solutions for living in an unstable 21st century.

over the past decade pvi have played to over 250,000 people; devised and performed 38 major works; instigated over 60 tactical interventions; featured in 21 national and international exhibitions; have toured to over 75 renowned venues and festivals and collaborated with extraordinary local artists, communities and makers on the ground along the way.

pvi's work is taught as part of contemporary performance studies in universities across australia. the pvi team have backgrounds in intervention, visual art, activism, performance, live art, video, sound art, movement, performance and programming. each contribute their diverse skills towards creating artworks with their audiences at the heart of each experience.

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:

1. first nations - recognise, respect and celebrate the centrality of first nations cultures to the uniqueness of australian identity.

our first nations australian are the custodians of 75,000 years of cultural knowledge.

we need to champion and prioritise first nations voices across all aspects of the arts, ensuring that we are all respectfully grounded by this knowledge and not by the false narrative of colonisation.

first nations self-determination needs to be facilitated by supporting a national body with the autonomy and expertise to advise governments, consult on current and future needs, and determine areas of focus and priority.

first nations led organisations can offer leadership and play an integral role as incubators and safe cultural spaces. supporting them – as well as individual creatives will have a huge impact on the resilience and sustainability of sector.

investment and capacity building of first nations small to medium arts organisations will ensure future development pathways for creative workers and leaders.

2. a place for every story - ensure that government support reflects the diversity of australia

australia's cultural diversity should be reflected in collections, exhibitions and presentation opportunities. public funding for arts organisations needs to be contingent upon a commitment to policies which promote cultural diversity.

artists and audiences with disability have the same level of access to arts programs enjoyed by all australians. public funding for arts organisations needs to be contingent upon a functioning disability action plan.

gender disparities in fees, opportunities and representation are overcome through policy and regulation. public funding for arts organisations needs to be contingent upon enforceable policies and programs at each funded organisation for redressing disparity.

all discrimination against lgbtqia australians ends.

all discrimination against artists with a disability ends.

all discrimination against sexism and sexual harassment in the workplace ends.

all relevant government departments must collect demographic information that allows for strategic program planning addressing lgbtqia artists and artists with a disability.

all arts venues, institutions, artist-led spaces need to be urgently provisioned with funding to address indirect disability discrimination re lack of access, enabling full inclusion in all areas of programming, employment and creative activity. we operate from a small studio in boorloo, which is rented. there is currently no disability access or support available to us to request building upgrades or relocate to a more suitable premises. this inhibits our chances of employing art workers with a disability, inviting disabled audiences to engage with us in person or running workshops that are inclusive for all. we need help to do better, so that we can be better.

3. the centrality of the artist - support excellence and the special role of artists and their creative collaborators.

we fund art because its a collective good, a part of public infrastructure and a civil right. we need a cultural policy that celebrates and values artistic practice as a job of work, that doesn't rely on artists being impoverished and that recognises the unique role arts and culture plays in society.

we need to empower artists to:

- develop and grow their practice
- continue to be creatively fearless when challenging the status quo,
- take creative risks - invent new ways of being, doing and thinking
- value their own significant contribution to society.

we also need to understand that great work does not emerge from thin air. the process of making it, where and how its developed and who with, takes time, money and a high level of interdisciplinary thinking and planning. supporting the process of making is equally important as the end product. it strengthens our connections with our community, expands our reach across business, industry and international networks and enables new ideas to thrive. artists know that we are in service to the public – that is the core purpose of our job. in order to do this job to the absolute best of our ability, we need to:

- double the australia council's funds for independent and small arts organisations and individual artists – recognising that it is the crucial engine room of the arts.
- make funding provisions for artist-led initiatives so that they are recognised as innovators, leaders and change makers within the arts ecology.
- trial a basic income scheme for artists and arts workers to address the financial instability caused by intermittent, periodic and project based faced nature of working in the arts. this will fundamentally contribute to the sectors regrowth post pandemic.
- prioritise affordable space for artists in urban and regional master planning.

- ensure artists have their profession recognised by centrelink, building our capacity to earn an income from our work, and not jeopardising any payment of benefits if one-off grants or awards are earned.
- support artists, organisations and networks to address best practice across disability and access needs, cald and bipoc communities, ensuring we are accessible to all for all.
- provide leadership opportunities outside of the arts into other areas of industry encouraging cross-disciplinary research and connection.
- initiate programs that enable artists to attain carbon neutral practices and projects opening up opportunities to connect with clean, green businesses.
- facilitate opportunities for artists [emerging and established] to sit on boards of cultural institutions to offer their expertise and voice the concerns and challenges of working artists in their communities.

4. strong institutions - strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector to contribute to national life, community wellbeing and the economy.

all recommendations from the senate inquiry into the 'impact of the 2014 and 2015 commonwealth budget decisions on the arts' are implemented, with a priority on evidence-based arts policies and public funding at appropriate levels, taking the 2013 level as a baseline.

a radical restructuring of arts board governance is long overdue. too often arts boards are dominated by risk averse lawyers, accountants and perhaps most problematically, corporate executives from the fossil fuel and mining sectors. this compromises creative freedom of expression and stifles creative risk taking.

we also need to establish six year organisational funding that enables each arts org to not just fulfil their kpi's but grow their companies work repertoire. on average it takes us two years to develop a new work. the three year funding cycle is not enough to conceptualise, plan, research and develop, tour and imagine new works of scale and ambition or operate from a sustainable perspective. it forces work to be quick and small and erodes capacity to think and plan for the long term.

5. reaching the audience - ensure australian creativity thrives here and abroad in the digitally enabled 21st century

we make participatory performance work that situates its audience at the heart of the experience. we use gameplay alongside emerging, familiar and diy technology to explore creative solutions for living in an unstable 21st century.

we believe in the potential for art to create systemic change. through our practice we critically investigate contentious issues from privacy, disaster capitalism, climate crisis, corporate power, political corruption and the slow creep of alternative facts into our daily lives. each work is an invitation to audiences to get involved and imagine positive change together.

over the past 22 years we have keenly observed the increasing appetite of our local, national and international audiences to want to engage and expand their notion of participation. it is no longer the case that 'experiencing art' means entering a white box space or sitting in a black box theatre. there is so much more terrain to explore and forms to experiment with.

socially engaged art is process-driven and often seeks to address and influence real-world issues. they are participatory, directly engage communities and audiences in the production of the artwork, and often take place in the public realm. swedish curator maria lind describes it as *"art that involves more people than objects, whose horizon is social and political change"*

this is an area of practice that currently sits in-between the silos of traditional artforms and has been largely neglected in terms of financial support. we would dearly love to see serious investment in socially engaged art that not only invites participation, but actively seeks out new forms of audience engagement, be that online or a mixture of hybrid real life and digital experiences. we see this as a huge opportunity to invest in audience development, they are after all our reason for being.