

National Cultural Policy Submission

Dr Cathy Laudenbach

On behalf of a for-profit arts business

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

I work at the coal face of at First Nations Art Organisation Merrepen Arts Culture and Language in Nauiyu Daly River. We are considered an art centre of artistic excellence in the Northern Territory and in Australia. Yet in recent years our funding has been reduced! Why? You might ask as I did. The money was not reduced it was rounded out!! Interesting response.

But why. We have some of Australia's best and brightest in our centre. Recently when a group of corporate people from David Jones and Country Road visited Darwin they rang us and were prepared to drive 5 hours round trip to meet the artists first hand.

As a manager I get crap pay and work long hours. I am well qualified yet as far as my salary is concerned you would not know how qualified I am and how experienced I am. Yes it is my choice. But why am I not paid more to do this important job.

The industry has not been reviewed for years. We are part of the backbone of the Australian art world.

A Place for Every Story

Of course there is a place for every story. We don't need to be told that.

We need to see and hear the stories and have funding to support the stories being told and made visible. These artists are gifted rock stars and should be treated as such. Not second rate citizens!!

The Centrality of the Artist

The artists need to be at the centre. But they need support from Art Centres and this means more support from Art Centre staff and managers. They can't do it on their own. They need support. You will only get good managers if you pay correct wages. As they say pay peanuts.... get monkeys!