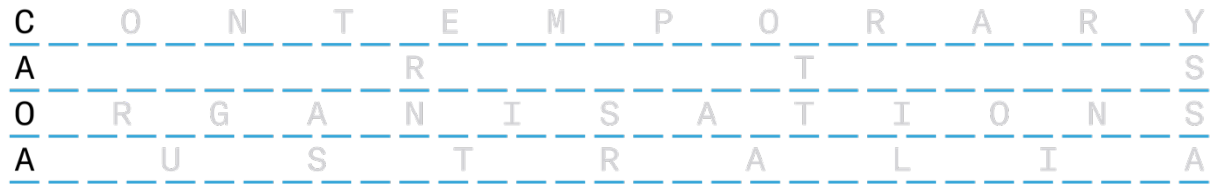


# National Cultural Policy Submission



Submitted: On behalf of an arts peak body

## CAOA National Cultural Policy submission 2022

### Contemporary Art Organisations Australia – An introduction:

Established in 1995, Contemporary Art Organisations Australia (CAOA) is an Australia-wide network of 15 public, independent contemporary art spaces representing the small-to-medium visual arts sector. Located in every state and territory, CAOAs are free, inclusive and vital spaces for Australian artists, arts workers and audiences. We contribute to the ongoing development of visual arts in this country and help shape our national identity by sharing the ideas, aspirations and visions of the many diverse artists we support.

We offer living artists and arts workers career defining opportunities through artistic programs and professional development. CAOAs alumni have gone on to build globally renowned careers and participate in prestigious international opportunities at Venice Biennale, documenta, Performa Biennial, TATE Modern, Palais de Tokyo, Sharjah Biennale and countless others.

Our combined global audience of over 1 million people per year experience our work through exhibitions, education programs, community engagement activities, performances, publications, workshops, public events, international presentations, regional touring projects and more.

With operations supported by federal and state arts funding agencies, along with private philanthropy and enterprise, the CAOAs network actively delivers a high return on investment of public funding for artists and audiences.

Rather than quantify our contribution via numbers and statistics, we share below three testimonies from our *21<sup>st</sup> Century CAOs: A Forward Plan*, which represents the voices of highly regarded artists and arts workers that best encapsulate the critical work of the CAOAs network:

*CAOs give artists the space to play, to experiment, to take risks. To meet their audiences face-to-face in a flexible, rigorous and supportive environment. Without them Australia would lose its breeding ground for experimentation and endanger its capacity to generate the 'new'.*  
- **Tracey Moffatt**, artist

*I can't imagine an art world in Australia without CAOs. Early on in my career, several CAOs provided me with a platform to create new bodies of work that were important stages in the development of my practice. They were technical and conceptual leaps – a result of wanting to push my practice as far as I could because I knew that they would be seen by a critical audience. To this day, I take these spaces as seriously as I did when I first left art school. I continue to see work that inspires me.*  
- **Patricia Piccinini**, artist

*CAOs support artists in a way that is different to the support from State and regional galleries, who are concerned with looking after collections and developing exhibition programs. This makes CAOs extremely unique in terms of their charter and very important for artists across Australia.*  
- **Karen Quinlan**, Director, formerly National Portrait Gallery and Bendigo Art Gallery

We are excited by the opportunity to put forward CAOAs recommendations for the National Cultural Policy and look forward to working collaboratively with the Federal Government to ensure the centrality of art and artists in Australian culture.

## **CAOA objectives for inclusion in the National Cultural Policy:**

### **1. Strategic investment in First Nations artists' and cultural producers' leadership and participation in all levels of artistic practice, management and governance**

CAOA strongly advocates for increased investment in First Nations artists, cultural producers, arts workers, organisations and community leaders. We recognise that any cultural policy should centre the right to self-determination, representation and truth-telling. We want to see First Nations people represented not only in our programs, but at executive and board level across the arts sector. To do this in a way that is ethical and culturally safe, workplaces must build cultural literacy and offer competitive remuneration, pathway programs and professional development opportunities for both emerging leaders and established arts workers. As such, CAOAs advocate for targeted investment that will allow cultural organisations to adequately remunerate First Nations people on boards, staff and advisory councils.

CAOA also supports the establishment of a long-term capacity building and career pathways programs that is self-determined, led and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **2. Strategic investment in independent artists through enhanced funding and peer-assessment frameworks**

The 'Centrality of the Artist' is a critical pillar of any cultural policy, and CAOAs advocate for increased funding for artists to develop and present new work, undertake professional development opportunities in regional, national and international contexts, and to support strategic investment and participation in international arenas. In the spirit of this pillar, CAOAs also strongly recommend the primacy of peer-assessment frameworks in implementing arts funding objectives. Furthermore, we advocate for more frequent and diverse grant rounds for independent artists, specifically funding for research and development; presentation; and quick response grants for time sensitive opportunities locally, nationally and internationally.

### **3. A focus on sustainability and capacity building to ensure 'Strong Institutions'**

CAOA strongly advocates for increased support of the small-to-medium visual arts sector so that we can address organisational sustainability. A decade of static and declining arts funding has stretched the capacity of our sector and our ability to deliver programming commitments in a way that is ethically resourced. If our organisations are not funded sustainably we cannot ensure ethical working conditions, and accessible and culturally safe spaces for our many diverse artists, audiences, employees and communities.

Investment in 'Strong Institutions' will allow us to:

- Equitably remunerate artists and arts workers
- Deliver existing programs with adequate resourcing
- Deepen audience and community engagement in an ethically supported environment
- Build cultural literacy within organisations
- Support staff, board, volunteers, artists and communities through training, professional development opportunities, development projects and wellbeing measures

### **4. New markets and new audiences for Australian stories**

For artists to have sustainable careers they require global audiences in addition to local markets. CAOs are instrumental in facilitating these opportunities, with longstanding networks and relationships across the globe. Currently Australian artists are unable to participate in key international opportunities due to declining funding, inflexibility and a shift away from international engagement by funding bodies. CAOAs champion renewed investment in the international arena so that Australian artists and organisations can share Australian stories with audiences around the world. Opportunities such as residencies, participation in biennales, exhibitions, art fairs, festivals and live art are critical in growing interest in Australian practitioners and building commercial markets through the acquisition and representation of contemporary Australian artists. Through investment in international commissioning, reciprocal and bilateral partnership, research and professional development, we can support artists throughout their careers, thereby cultivating mature local, national and international ecologies and economies, which enable artists to profit from these expanded opportunities.

## 5. Strategic Investment:

To meet the objectives outlined above CAO A advocates for a National Cultural Policy that includes:

- **\$100 million investment to pay First Nations** people in professional, board and advisory council roles, as well as for professional pathway programs that will embed First Nations arts workers in arts organisations
- **\$100 million additional funding for independent artists** distributed through arm's length funding and more diverse grant rounds
- **\$100 million additional funding for small-to-medium arts organisations** for the points outlined in Objective 3 and to support the sustainable delivery of operations, new work, learning and participation objectives, and related community engagement. As was demonstrated with the implementation of the Visual Arts and Crafts Strategy in 2002, this additional investment will have a significant impact in strengthening the capacity of the cultural sector to contribute to national life, cultural identity and participation, community wellbeing and the economy.
- **\$50 million additional funding for strategic international initiatives** that are driven by small-to-medium arts organisations and/or independent artists
- **Restoration of funding to the Australia Council and increased investment** to support the above objectives and, in particular, First Nations Advancement, Organisational Strength and the Centrality of the Artist.
- **Renewal of and increased investment in the Visual Arts and Crafts Strategy (VACS)**, building on the demonstrated outcomes of VACS over the past two decades to ensure cooperation and reciprocity across federal and state agencies, and to enhance artform innovation and program delivery, engagement and impact in metropolitan, regional and international contexts

### In conclusion:

CAOA are deeply embedded within our communities throughout Australia. Our ethical leadership and ongoing connectedness to local stories, people and cultures nurtures cultural participation, cohesion and community wellbeing. Through the celebration of diverse experiences of contemporary Australia our audiences reflect the breadth of storytelling and engage regularly and repeatedly with the CAO A network. Targeted investment in our sector will enable CAO A to remain resilient, to support the arts and cultural practices of First Nations communities, independent artists and arts workers, and to leverage our capacity to engage diverse communities as participants and supporters.

### CAOA Network Members

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art (NSW), Adelaide Contemporary Experimental – ACE (SA), Artspace (NSW), Australian Centre for Contemporary Art – ACCA (VIC), Blak Dot Gallery (VIC), Canberra Contemporary Art Space (ACT), Centre for Contemporary Photography (VIC), Contemporary Art Tasmania (TAS), Firstdraft (NSW), Gertrude Contemporary (VIC), Institute of Modern Art (QLD), Northern Centre for Contemporary Art (NT), Performance Space (NSW), Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (WA), West Space (VIC)

### Contact details

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Confirmation of whether or not your submission can be made public (published) or kept confidential:

**Submission can be made public**