

National Cultural Policy Submission

Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH)

Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Creative Arts (DCCA)

Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS)

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

Responses to the following question: What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you?

First Nations

Recognising and respecting the crucial place of these stories at the centre of our arts and culture.

First Nations' ways of knowing are integral to any progressive society. They are simultaneously complex, important, traditional and non-traditional.

Unfortunately, they continue to be marginalised. It is essential that Australian society not only understands but embraces First Nations' history, stories, culture and visions for a sustainable future. HASS and creative disciplines are at the forefront of interpreting and creating understandings of First Nations' knowledge. Through our fields, our society can appreciate and see the value, importance, and power of applying these ways of seeing and knowing. Australia should be proud of its First Nations history and visions for its future, and should therefore invest in, and celebrate it through the creativity and innovation of the arts, social sciences and humanities.

A Place for Every Story

Reflecting the diversity of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.

Arguably one of the most diverse countries in the world, Australia needs to better support its diversity by investing in the talent of the future.

Representation of diversity is not enough – diversity needs to be embodied by those creating and sharing those representations. A significant gap in the arts at present is sustainable and meaningful investment in current and future talent, through formal training, reward and recognition, a liveable income, and ongoing sponsorship and mentoring, not just project-by-project work. A healthy, distinctive, collaborative, and thriving Australian culture needs to see itself in the works it produces, and in the creative industries supporting that work.

The Centrality of the Artist

Supporting the artist as worker and celebrating their role as the creators of culture.

Art is work and part of an impactful set of industries and careers, not a hobby. The importance of the arts to society – from entertainment to culture, to health and wellbeing, to ageing and care – is currently under valued. By giving artists financial and social recognition as a key driver of a successful, thriving and healthy nation, Australia can become a distinguished world-leader in arts-based approaches to life, business, the environment, and social care. This could be a signal approach for the new government.

Strong Institutions

Providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts and culture.

Investment in arts and cultural institutions, from private training providers to universities, to formal, public and smaller, specialist arts spaces, will ensure that creativity through the arts in Australia fulfils our potential to support a thriving economy and to help communities to cohere and flourish. The Government could show how much it values the arts and communities – across all areas of life and society – through substantial and ongoing investment in tangible resources, places, and spaces where artists are trained and mentored, and their art is shared and experienced. In a New Cultural Policy, the Government could expect that training providers and universities foreground the high value of arts and culture within their own institutions and display that support externally.

Reaching the Audience

Ensuring our stories reach the right people at home and abroad.

Australia should be proud of the work it creates and the culture and talent it harvests, and it should be a first-choice destination for artists (across all stages of their career) to work and develop their craft. The Government should invest in better digital infrastructure for ensuring that diverse audiences are able to experience Australian content – from local venues to touring events, to international partnerships and exchange programs, and to augmented and mixed-reality environments that can take Australian stories and culture anywhere, at any time, on any device.

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

Benefiting Australian communities

We advise an approach to a renewed cultural policy that is focused on the benefits of arts for Australian communities, well-being, and personal expression. This approach aims to shift the perception and practice of arts from the privilege of individuals to the need of communities, regions, cities, and our nation. The Arts as an essential cultural, social and economic need: the importance of arts and culture in building and shaping societies, cultural connections and economic stability might be further emphasised in both metropolitan and regional contexts. Consider the role the arts plays in rehabilitation, wellbeing, and recovery (e.g., [Country Arts SA](#)) and for advocacy and making connections with seemingly disparate fields (e.g. environmentalism – [earthcanvas.com.au](#)) and storytelling. The arts create social and cultural bonds within and across communities as evidenced by research in health, medicine and psychology. Arts-based engagement promotes cooperation and reduces social isolation; all of which contribute to a shared sense of community pride, identity and coherence. Investment in the arts is investment in people and community.

Better support for regional arts

This was confirmed by a [recent study](#) focussing on regional 'creative hotspots', providing case studies of regional cities and towns in which creative activity is an important economic and cultural driver. Although there is no data yet, this trend has possibly increased during the COVID-19 lockdowns as professionals have relocated outside metropolitan areas with the realisation of remote modes of working and engagement have become increasingly the case (and accepted). Yet regionally based artists have increasingly negative perceptions about the impact of their practice, suggesting a policy shift is required. This shift would also benefit First Nations artists whose creativity and inspiration are supported by a cultural sense of being On-Country. The lack of commensurate support, opportunities, and promotion of regional arts in national policy also impacts upon education outside major cities. Regional universities and universities with strong regional agenda can only thrive if supported by an active cohort of arts and cultural professionals. Appointment of arts and cultural educators in regional schools and universities is not sufficient on its own: a community is required, and stronger support for regional arts communities is urgently required in national policy and arts funding.