

# National Cultural Policy Submission

**Stephanie Radok**

Independent artist and writer

Adelaide, South Australia

I have three practical suggestions for the National Cultural Policy.

1. Every international airport, every airport in Australia should include a large shop where First Nations art from First Nations Art Centres is sold. And the majority of the proceeds go back to the Art Centres. This would be a big logistic exercise but there are many people who would be great at making it work and it would support First Nations art and culture in a very practical and ethical way now and into the future. First Nations people can be the managers and fill many other roles in such an operation as well as being the artists.

2. Every Government House in Australia needs to have a First Nations Centre built on its grounds. These buildings would be cultural centres, information centres, theatres, workshops, healing and learning places - statements of sovereignty. Such spaces are centrally located and speak of possession, privilege and power. Okay so they should also do that for First Nations.

3. Culture in Australia is often presented simplistically and patronisingly in simple binaries. Culture in Australia is from all over the world and here – it is rich because it is First Nations, and Refugee, and Migrant, and Settler. And has global and local contributions to make. It is not a voice but voices.

In 2012 I wrote a book called *An Opening: Twelve Love Stories about Art* which was published by Wakefield Press and is still in print. And available as an e-book. It is based on thirty years of looking at and writing about art shown in Australia. That time included the emergence of Australian First Nations art onto the national and international stage. Over the last ten years many people have said that they found insights in the book that opened their eyes to First Nations art. And to the possibilities of their personal relationship to all art.

Rupert Myer AO read it and wrote to me: “Your insights into engaging with art on a very personal level were a delight to read. It is a critical part of the discourse of everyone in the arts to articulate and record their intrinsic worth and the value to be placed on artistic endeavour. Too often we are on the defensive.”

In the introduction to the book I wrote: “In taking *An Opening* as the title for this book I wish to refer both to all the openings at which art is introduced to its audience, and the bright clear light that characterises Australia which can be seen as potentially leading to an opening of the mind.”

Should all Australians read the book? Could it be included in the curriculum of schools? Or be compulsory reading for Members of Parliament?