

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Submitted: As an artist and 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

As First nations cultures become more fully recognised and understood, artists of all backgrounds might further absorb and develop culturally apposite knowledge and positions. Finding a balance between appropriation and shared histories, stories and artistic responses will help facilitate authenticity and future artistic freedoms in the field. Intercultural understandings are challenging on many levels, but opportunities for growth through meaningful, thoughtful artistic activities give hope for everyone's improved future and the nation's advancement. We seem to be in the midst of a national 're-setting', which can be greatly progressed by multiplicities of artistic responses and ideas.

A Place for Every Story

Every individual story has an inherent importance in the national story. Based on innovation, new and reimagined ideas, these can contribute cultural richness and progressive inclusiveness. Whether these are from or for the many or the few is not important.

The Centrality of the Artist

Artists have the ability to not only enhance the world, but also to change the world. The responsibilities of the artist includes not just representation or repetition of the known, but also explorations and propositions of the new. Questioning, theorising, provoking, leading are just a few elements that add relevance and vibrancy to this work. To do this, the artist needs space, skills, time, and money. A national cultural policy has the responsibility to interrogate and offer tangible solutions for enabling and sustaining multiple pathways and careers in the arts.

Strong Institutions

Institutions have the opportunity to nurture both individual and societal growth. Achievable challenges might be to strive for collective and individual excellence, to push boundaries, to seek artistically rich solutions and develop sustainability for artists, artistic researchers and associated disciplines. This may be enhanced by setting the highest standards, by recognising and fostering difference, by supporting the flourishing of artistic ideas, by providing robust intellectual resources and establishing the arts as a core human activity and need.

Reaching the Audience

Arts are often described as a luxury, a comfort, a consolation. These facets may be important, but do not stand alone. Artwork that challenges the way people think, that takes people on a previously unthought of pathway, that presents different ideas and inspires new ways of being is critical to a rich cultural environment. Sophisticated artworks of the past are generally accepted by all; sophisticated artworks of today can reach out in the same way and also create personal and artistic growth and progress for artists and community.

Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why. Feel free to respond to any or all that are applicable to you:

First Nations

Recently my practice (as musician and writer) has taken an important turn. Due to the pandemic, my work moved through several new stages, the first being a focus on the quotidian, the nearby and aspects of place. Integral to this has been a fresh understanding of the ancient histories and the multiple histories of Australia. Now I cannot imagine my work without reference to knowledge I have acquired through this. It is often implied rather than overt, but underpins my thought processes in a very significant way.

A Place for Every Story

Story telling in my work revolves around artistic practice: performing music, creating music and writing about these processes and associated ideas. Sharing these stories through performance, recording and publication is essential, but, for me, has mostly occurred through international channels.

The Centrality of the Artist

As a musician, I respond through sound. I use my instrument (flute), digital technology, and imagination to create and present my work. It has not been possible to build an entire career in new music here, however, despite international recognition as musician and artistic researcher. The ability to create my work now has depended on rigorous, disciplined work in the past – the centrality of music performance and identity that has fed into every aspect of my life, both professionally as a performer, teacher, and writer and also as a parent, citizen and thinker. My skills as a musician, the courage to be creative, and the ability to articulate artistic processes have been developed across my lifetime despite always being pressed to justify and defend this as a profession. Can the future be different?

Strong Institutions

Institutions (such as universities, orchestras, professional networks) provide a basic opportunity for beginning a life in the arts (music), and can support changes to priorities over time. A strengthening of institutional willingness to support boldness, difference, inventiveness and diversity in career development is essential and could be vastly improved. Arts careers depend on deep, critical thinking as well as demanding daily training or

production, creative dreaming and making, entrepreneurial skills and abilities to share and articulate complex ideas. Strong arts institutions have a responsibility, and perhaps require explicit policy, to support arts education and careers.

Reaching the Audience

Through multiple phases of my career (orchestral musician, teacher, concert producer/curator, university lecturer, researcher, journal editor, music creator, solo performer) it has been difficult to obtain funding for innovative independent new music projects in Australia. Despite a few successes, the challenge to develop independent audiences outside institutions remains. Priorities of grant bodies seem to emphasize participation, perceived popularity, and saleability rather than excellence, innovation and complex or refined art making designed to expand understanding and broaden experience in the arts. We all want to share our work in the arts, and assistance rather than competition could be key to this.

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

A comprehensive appreciation of, support for, and understanding of excellence in the arts at all levels.

Pathways for artists that do not rely on competition or commercial interests for success.

The development of arts centers and institutions that foster multiple areas of 'cutting-edge' arts creation, presentation and research.

Space and support for independent events and festivals of new music and multimedia arts that explore unique and exceptional ideas and connections. For example, new technologies, sound art, deep listening spaces and performances that create connections to place.

Establishment of music education as a core subject in all schools, including singing, listening, creative music making, specific musical skills development and experience of and knowledge about multiple musical histories and styles.