

# National Cultural Policy

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## Introduction

The Australian Academy of the Humanities is the national body for the humanities in Australia, championing the contribution humanities, arts and culture make to national life. As one of the nation's five Learned Academies, we are a unique resource for government, working to ensure cultural, creative and ethical perspectives inform Australia's plans for now and into the future.

We welcome the development of a National Cultural Policy (NCP). We support efforts to recognise the centrality of arts and culture to Australian life, community and industry. We agree that the NCP needs to embed a set of principles that connects arts and culture with a broad range of other policy domains. And we support the commitment and prioritisation in the NCP to First Nations first.

Our submission focusses on the **underpinning contribution of humanities and arts research, education and leadership to a cultural capability agenda** – specifically to industry and workforce planning, research and development, and skills and training.

## Summary recommendations

1. **Embed principles of cultural capability and belonging in a whole-of-government agenda.** New Zealand has put cultural capability and belonging at the heart of its Living Standards Frameworks developed by Treasury.<sup>1</sup> This is an instructive model for Australia – to ensure that culture is a pillar of policy-making at the heart of government.
2. **Recognise and strengthen the talent and training 'pipeline'.** The humanities and arts, along with the social sciences (SHAPE)<sup>2</sup> educate and graduate more than half Australia's university students, and develop cultural, creative and critical skills and knowledge with broad application across the economy and society.
3. **Support and incentivise cultural and creative industry development** – commensurate with its contribution to the economy, including its potential to support regional economies. This is vital to maximise efficiencies across government programs, facilitate industry growth, and strengthen training and workforce development.
4. **Unlock the potential for strategic research and development (R&D) investment** building on well-established links with university-based research capabilities in the humanities and wider SHAPE disciplines and expanding existing mechanisms for industry development.
5. **Recognise the university sector as core institutions that sustain our arts and culture** across teaching and research and community engagement.

## 1. Cultural and creative skills and capability

### 1.1 The humanities and creative arts ‘pipeline’ underpins the creative economy.

Australia’s higher education sector trains cultural workers and artists and delivers creative skills across the economy. The humanities and arts are at the forefront of this skills and capability agenda, training the next-generation talent, and teachers, in literature, history, creative arts, film, media and communications, library and information services, heritage, language and culture. One of the most likely qualifications to be held by those employed in creative occupations across the economy is in a humanities field, media and communications.

Humanities researchers and teachers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have been instrumental in promoting knowledge of Australia’s distinctive Indigenous cultures to domestic and international audiences. This role is the single most important, distinctive feature of Australian humanities in a global context. Indigenous-led research offers unique insights on Australia history, society, and culture. Indigenous scholars in the humanities in Australia have extended the global relevance and intellectual reach of many fields of study.

### 1.2 There are risks to the supply of skills and talent for workforce development.

The former Government’s Job-ready Graduates reforms stand to impact the creative economy and industries agenda from the perspective of supply side capability of creative knowledge and skills.<sup>3</sup> The changes are designed to dissuade students from undertaking courses in the fields of media and communications, history, heritage, archaeology, and Indigenous studies – all of which play a vital role in the creative economy. The reforms are driving inequity and having erratic impacts on individual universities, students and local and regional economies.

### 1.3 The NCP needs a clear line of sight across this talent pipeline and career pathways.

This starts with better data for informed decision making. It is not currently possible to effectively track how many cultural workers, artists, or arts practitioners are graduated annually, their demographic profile, distribution across Australia, and graduate destinations. We do not know what access and opportunity to Work Integrated Learning looks like for arts students across Australia’s universities, regional, remote, metropolitan. Nor can we track opportunities for industry engagement and collaboration for our humanities and creative arts PhD students.

## 2. Industry and workforce planning

### 2.1 The humanities, arts and cultural workforce and creative sector are conspicuously absent from Australia’s National Workforce Strategy – and its sector-specific plans.<sup>4</sup>

This is despite Australia’s creative economy employing in excess of 600,000 workers, either directly in creative occupations in creative industries or embedded in creative roles across other industry sectors, and being worth \$112 billion of the nation’s GDP.<sup>5</sup> Pre-COVID-19, this substantial part of the Australian economy was growing at twice the rate of the general economy.<sup>6</sup>

In Australia, creative businesses are predominantly (in the order of 95 per cent) small and medium enterprises (SMEs): ‘small and micro businesses, including many sole traders, ... they tend to fly under the radar of government policy’.<sup>7</sup> As with other industries, they have been hard hit by COVID-19 and recent natural disasters.

## 2.2 The importance of creative and cultural industries to economic recovery in regional areas warrants policy attention at a national level.

The Regional Australia Institute identifies the creative industries as one of four sectors which are 'key for the economic future of regional Australia'. Research led by Professor Stuart Cunningham AM FAHA, shows that in regional Queensland, for example, creative industries are bigger employers than both mining and agriculture.<sup>8</sup>

The creative and cultural industries are a crucial conduit for Indigenous cultural innovation for business and community development and regional tourism. One such exemplar is the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park which 'over three decades has taken Indigenous tourism in Queensland from "virtually unheard of" to "a cultural tourism icon".<sup>9</sup> That this facility permanently closed in 2021 in the midst of COVID impacts on international tourists is a capability loss with repercussions far beyond its 65 employees (a majority of whom are Indigenous).<sup>10</sup>

Creative and cultural industry development in the regions is an under-realised opportunity for the sustainability, livability and wellbeing of regional and rural communities.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.3 A national evidence-based approach to industry development is needed.

The creative and cultural industries need to be elevated to the status of current industry sectors, commensurate with their contribution to the economy. We recommend the following:

1. **Reclassify the industries that underpin the creative sector.** The way we currently define and measure these industries as different, seemingly unrelated parts under the existing industry divisions of the national accounts is inadequate. Giving visibility and coherence to the cultural and creative industries would help to develop a more robust account of the scale of the sector and its inputs and outputs. It would maximise efficiencies across government programs, facilitate industry growth, and strengthen training and workforce development.
2. **An Independent Review of the creative and cultural industries.** This could be undertaken by the Productivity Commission, or equivalent mechanism, tasked to map the system and examine the efficacy of existing industry support and stimulus in light of workforce needs.<sup>12</sup> The Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research together with Australian Bureau of Statistics mapping (through its satellite accounts, labour market and workforce data collection) provides an initial baseline.
3. **Australia needs a coordinating entity to drive policy innovation, akin to Nesta in the UK – which could be co-funded by Federal, State and Local government.** This would enable a comprehensive effort across the three levels of government which all play an integral role in supporting the creative economy, as well as a cross-portfolio effort – including digital economy, industry development, diplomacy and health and wellbeing.

# 3. Incentives for cultural and creative R&D

## 3.1 Humanities and the arts in cultural and creative R&D.

Existing R&D mechanisms could be utilised now to support the cultural and creative industries through the Government's industry development programs, R&D provisions, future workforce development, and national research priorities. We recommend that:

1. **Australia's R&D tax incentive provisions support opportunities for creative and cultural industries, digital R&D, design for social innovation and future service-oriented industries**

**embracing social enterprises.** The exclusion of research in SHAPE from core R&D activities has been a long-term disincentive for industry collaboration.<sup>13</sup>

2. **Realise the potential for an R&D collaboration premium to include the cost of employing new PhD graduates,** inclusive of both SHAPE and STEM, in their first three years of employment. This has the potential to drive cultural change at a national scale, seeding the development of a next generation PhD workforce, capable of building links across both industry and academia.
3. **Better utilise Australia's world-leading research expertise on the creative economy.** Unlike in the STEM or economics domains (Chief Scientists/ Chief Economists), there are few mechanisms for bringing this expertise to bear on national policy formulation for industry development. Research-based advice needs to inform policy deliberations.
4. **Incubate university/industry collaboration through existing mechanisms.** The Australian Research Council's Industrial Transformation Scheme has a remit to engage 'Australia's best researchers in issues facing the new industrial economies and training the future workforce'. Expanding the scope of this scheme, which is currently aligned to the Government's Industry Growth Centres, to accommodate a creative and cultural industries growth agenda would ensure that these industries can adapt, thrive and meet current and future digital, social and economic disruption. A pilot program could be trialled, drawing also on lessons from similar schemes in the UK – which have focused attention on non-metropolitan areas. The ARC's Industry Fellowships, currently under development, should similarly have this expanded remit.
5. **Appreciate and capitalise on the potential for strategic R&D investment and collaboration across our cultural and creative and research sectors.** In our submission to the Inquiry into Australia's National Cultural Institutions, we put the spotlight on the under-recognised contributions of the galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) sector to research, higher education and innovation.

In the humanities and arts, there is a strong basis from which to develop bottom-up as well as more strategic approaches to cultural industry-research collaborations. Benefits that have flown from existing investments are in evidence in the highly ranked case studies in the ARC's Engagement and Impact exercise, such as:

- [Investigating and supporting creative industries as an entrepreneurial system](#)
- [Reconnecting Indigenous Australian communities with heritage objects held in museums and galleries](#)
- [Conserving and Interpreting Australia's Convict Past](#)
- [iCinema: Immersive interactivity in contemporary art and its creative and industrial applications](#)

## ATTACHMENT

The Academy periodically undertakes independent reviews of national capabilities in the humanities and arts to inform strategic planning and investment decisions at the institutional level in the national higher education system. See:

- A report on Disability and the Arts, Creative, and Cultural Industries in Australia –spotlight on workforce capability and confidence for the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA)(forthcoming), <https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/news/64381>
- Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia (2014) <https://humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/AAH-Mapping-HASS-2014.pdf>
- Australian Asian Research Collaborations in the Humanities: Mapping the Present, Planning the Future. (2021) <https://humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Australia-Asia-Collaboration-Volume-1.pdf> and <https://humanities.org.au/our-work/lasp-asia-v2/>
- Future Humanities Workforce (forthcoming) <https://humanities.org.au/our-work/projects/future-humanities-workforce/>
- In association with ACOLA, Professor Stuart Cunningham AM FAHA: SAF 10: Skills and Capabilities of Australian Enterprise Innovation, <https://acola.org.au/wp/PDF/SAF10/Full%20report.pdf>
- The Academy was the lead delivery partner for A New Approach (ANA) from 2018-2020 when it produced the first five Insight Reports, <https://humanities.org.au/our-work/a-new-approach/>

In our submission we have drawn from a number of recent policy submissions:

- Inquiry into Australia’s Cultural and Creative Industries and Institutions (2020), [https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/201028-AAH-Policy-Creative-Cultural-Industries\\_final.pdf](https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/201028-AAH-Policy-Creative-Cultural-Industries_final.pdf)
- Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements (2020), <https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/AAH-Policy-2020-National-Natural-Disaster-Arrangements.pdf>
- Higher Education Support Amendment (HESA) Bill 2020 – Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students, [https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/200817-AAH-Policy-Job-Ready-Legislation\\_final.pdf](https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/200817-AAH-Policy-Job-Ready-Legislation_final.pdf)
- Infrastructure Australia Audit (2019), <https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/AAH-Policy-2019-Infrastructure-Australia-Audit.pdf>
- Inquiry into Canberra’s National Institutions (2018), <https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/AAH-Policy-2018-Canberra-National-Institutions.pdf>
- The Digital Economy (2017), <https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/AAH-Policy-2017-Digital-Economy.pdf>
- Inquiry into Innovation and Creativity: Workforce for the New Economy (2016), <http://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/AAH-Policy-2016-InquiryInnovationCreativity.pdf>
- R&D Tax Incentive Review Report (2016), <http://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/AAH-Policy-2016-RD-Tax.pdf>

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<sup>1</sup> History of the LSF’ <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/history-lsf>

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<sup>2</sup> 'SHAPE' is a new collective name for the social sciences, humanities and the arts – subjects which help us make sense of the human world, to value and express the complexity of life and culture, and to understand and solve global issues. See <https://thisisshape.org.uk/>.

<sup>3</sup> See Australian Academy of the Humanities Submission to the Higher Education Support Amendment (HESA) Bill 2020 – Job-Ready Graduates and Supporting Regional and Remote Students [https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/200817-AAH-Policy-Job-Ready-Legislation\\_final.pdf](https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/200817-AAH-Policy-Job-Ready-Legislation_final.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> National Workforce Strategy, <https://www.dese.gov.au/workforce/national-workforce-strategy/plan-action>

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research (BCARR) (2018) 'The economic value of cultural and creative activity' <https://www.communications.gov.au/departmental-news/economic-value-cultural-and-creative-activity>

<sup>6</sup> A New Approach (2020) *Australia's cultural and creative economy: A 21st century guide* <https://www.humanities.org.au/new-approach/report5/>

<sup>7</sup> Stuart Cunningham (2013) *Hidden Innovation: Policy, Industry and the Creative Sector*, University of Queensland Press, p. 176

<sup>8</sup> The project website, containing several detailed reports on regional Australian 'hotspots' of creative activity, is at <https://research.qut.edu.au/creativehotspots/>

<sup>9</sup> Research shared with the Academy from Professor Stuart Cunningham AM FAHA and Dr Marion McCutcheon.

<sup>10</sup> 'Cairns' Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park shuts for good as COVID wreaks tourism havoc', <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-08/tjapukai-aboriginal-cultural-park-cairns-permanently-closes/13039720>

<sup>11</sup> Important analysis on the stimulus that regional cultural industries have on local economies has been conducted by Professor Chris Gibson and his collaborators over many years. See C. Gibson, G Waitt, J. Walmsley and J. Connell (2010) 'Cultural festivals and economic development in nonmetropolitan Australia', *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 29 (3): 280-293; and C. Gibson and J. Connell (2012) *Music Festivals and Regional Development in Australia*, Ashgate Publishing. Researchers from Newcastle University have been engaged in mapping the creative industries in the Hunter region as an 'entrepreneurial system'. See <https://dataportal.arc.gov.au/EI/Web/Impact/ImpactStudy/690>

<sup>12</sup> Australian Academy of the Humanities (2020) Federal Budget Submission <https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/AAH-Policy-2020-Pre-BudgetSubmission.pdf> Such a review was undertaken in the UK in 2017, in the context of the UK's overall Industry Strategy, with integration into broader industry policy in view. See UK Government (2017) Independent Review of the Creative Industries [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/649980/Independent\\_Review\\_of\\_the\\_Creative\\_Industries.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/649980/Independent_Review_of_the_Creative_Industries.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> 'Under section 355-25 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 none of the following activities are core R&D activities: ... research in social sciences, arts or humanities'. See 'Offset your R&D costs to help innovate and grow your business' <https://www.business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/research-and-development-tax-incentive>