National Cultural Policy Submission

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

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
• Measures need to be improved to protect First Nations art and artists from copyright infringement by corporations.
• It's important to understand and acknowledge that this involves more than just money, and cultural policy should reflect this to protect First Nations' culture from exploitation.
• These policies need to be voiced and written by, or in close collaboration with, First Nations people.
• More First Nations Artists should be invited to to take part in arts education and/or programs. Furthermore, works by First Nations artists should be included within arts education curriculums. For example, having First Nations people's poetry examined in poetry classes or films in film class.
• First Nations peoples have clearly outlined their needs and wants. We need to step out of their way and support them in implementing these changes and yield power to First Nations leaders. The hiring of First Nations people should be prioritised in arts and cultural institutions so that First Nations knowledge is truly embedded and represented within these institutions.

A Place for Every Story
• The quality of representation matters. Diversity must not be a check box or quota to be filled by arts organisations. Greater efforts should be directed towards training and mentoring CALD artists and art workers to counteract the effect of years of marginalisation.
• Due to disparities in funding, local councils with highest numbers of culturally diverse and disadvantaged communities lack sufficient means to create meaningful and relevant arts programmes. Creating funds directed towards these communities would ensure the development of sustainable arts projects that would create awareness and harness greater engagement.
• Applying the NSW Creative Kids vouchers as a national scheme would ensure fair access to art education to all Australian children regardless of their families' background or financial situation.
• Experts from CALD backgrounds should be included in grant and prize assessment panels.
• Community organisations who work with local artists should be better acknowledged and supported to adequately represent and celebrate diverse communities. It's important to unpack and understand what has stopped this from happening thus far. Why isn't there already a place for every story? It is a question that needs to be addressed.There is also a need to diversify the ways in which stories are told - different forms of storytelling should be embraced. This will aid diversity, for example in the film industry the three act structure is heavily favoured but is not currently suited for telling all stories. Therefore having a more open criteria and evaluation for arts is important in enabling a place for every story.
• Every Australian can be involved in diversified cultures and bring vitality to the field of art, making Australian art more dynamic and diverse.

• Hidden discrimination, whether in arts organisations, grants, or towards audiences and artists from migrant and marginalised communities challenge the need for a diverse arts sector.
• Highlighting the link between the arts and humanity is a great opportunity that could be emphasised in the upcoming cultural policy.
• Since funding and support are traditionally directed, there is less space for new or innovative work because it is considered financially risky. There are also issues in regards to education and accessibility. People need to be educated on the arts, our history and the changing face of Australia in order to develop their personal taste and therefore spend money on what they want to see. A way to reduce overheads from funding bodies would be good in lowering the price barrier for people to experience the arts too. Another challenge is ongoing racism or lack of inclusion for different people in the arts and less consideration or funding for their stories. (UMMTAs recent casting decision for Little Women is an example). Also the inclusion of arts and culture into the wider "creative industries" is increasingly problematic because it allows government bodies to show they contribute to the industry while not explicitly supporting Arts and Culture.
• There are opportunities to change attitudes by telling diverse stories which were apparent during the last election results which proved that we are slowly wanting to hear diverse voices and in the 2021 census results which show that 51% of Australia are immigrants now which means Australian stories will be unique compared to other places if these things are fostered. By including a place for every story it will also help with the other pillars, if everyone is heard, it will celebrate artist's work as cultural creators, create avenues to strong institutions and if we put First Nations stories at the heart of it without shying away, it will make our arts and culture unique for local and global audiences.

The Centrality of the Artist
• The current cost of tertiary education in the arts and cultural fields makes a professional career untenable for many, and those wanting to study arts and humanities should not be penalised by huge university course price increases in comparison to other courses.
• The commonality of unpaid internships which are important in getting experience in the field makes arts less accessible and further normalises unpaid work in the arts industry.
• Breaking into the arts industry is challenging in and of itself. As the saying indicates, "it's easier to get hired in the arts if you already have a job in the arts". The fact that unpaid internships and volunteer work is normalised further bleeds into the normalisation of unpaid work for the "exposure" — this state of the industry only reflects the lack of acknowledgment in the value of artists and creative collaborators. To some degree, this could be linked to underpaid creative workers.
• The government should also explore further schemes/models for supplying physical space for artists to be able to create and form communities of practice, where rent (particularly in urban areas) is a huge inhibitor.
• National level census data/official documents are insufficient at capturing the full picture of the careers of those working within the arts and cultural sector - many of those with "portfolio" careers. At a base level, data collection should be more inclusive so that a better understanding of the working conditions of artists and arts/cultural workers as well as the logistics of the industry more broadly can be gleaned by the government, hopefully enabling more informed policy and support structures in future.
• Further to the above point, Centrelink should better recognise artistic work and how those experiencing financial hardship can be best supported. Additionally, the "gig economy" nature of creative workers (lack of sustainability in professional career development) may be considered problematic as demonstrated by how many art workers did not receive government funding assistance during the pandemic since their work could not be justified as a stable income & was not considered "essential".
• Many initiatives and schemes should be considered to provide more stability to artists and art workers: The trial of a universal basic income (UBI) model, unemployment income guarantees, expansion of residencies offered to work in public institutions. For example,

the Basic Income for the Arts (BIA) pilot scheme in Ireland is €325/ week. A similar scheme should be attempted in Australia to nourish the sector and allow artists to fully realise their work without financial inhibition.

Strong Institutions
• Ensuring that the presence of arts and music within the education system is as well funded and promoted as other activities, such as sport.
• Arts and culture deserve recognition through their own department/ministry in government, not just represented as a subset of media and communications etc. Art for art's sake should be valued, and not viewed as a means to an end, or to satisfy policy outcomes such as 'innovation, creativity' - it is vital to avoid buzzwords that align the arts with the technology industries, which are often revered or discussed in regards to their instrumental/economic aims. New measures of evaluation should be considered to better acknowledge the intrinsic value of the arts to individual and community wellbeing in addition to the more instrumental outcomes which are often used to design, justify and measure arts funding and policy.
• Within the film and television industry facilitating more local Australian stories is important. This includes providing more funding for the ABC and ensuring the production of more Australian screen content.
• Evaluating the organisations that receive a prominent share of funding and support, and ensuring that grass roots organisations and arts on a local community level do not slip through the cracks.
• A national cultural policy should emphasise the importance of smaller/grassroots arts and cultural organisations and facilitate funding models which increase both public and private support.

Reaching the Audience
• Establishing an independent institution is a practical approach to advance Australia's cultural diplomacy. This institution could host joint organisations to foster deeper connections between Australian artists and other artists and audiences overseas. This would eventually lead to opportunities for shared knowledge and lasting alliances between Australia and other nations that are removed from political agendas.
• Utilise social media and the internet to reach more people in a creative way that can involve artists.
• When reaching audiences it's important to consider accessibility, whether this be in the language that information is put out in or if there are closed captions on videos or other issues that may impact who can access information, resources and networks in the arts and cultural sphere.
• In the process of expanding audience reach within the digital age, creative workers must be equipped with the knowledge and resources regarding copyright protection of their work to ensure creative outcomes are not just disseminated effectively here and abroad but also protected (e.g attaching a Creative Commons licence).

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
• All other pillars depart and return to this pillar. First Nations people understand the inherent value and interconnectedness of these other pillars. If we put First Nations peoples first, then all the other pillars will inevitably grow stronger and exist more sustainably, due to this foundational understanding of their interdependence. These pillars can not (and should not) be understood alone, otherwise we risk them being pitted against one another, or worse, none of them being realised at all.

A Place for Every Story
• Australia is known as a country with its diverse culture and inclusiveness which has rooted in its national identity and many artists and arts workers identify as a cultural minority in Australia. This is also true of our university cohort and we feel that a national cultural policy should recognise and give rise to diverse voices.
• Creating a safe and inclusive space in the arts for our multicultural nation will add to the evolution of our culture and foster an understanding of who we are as a nation and who we are as individuals. Focusing on this area will also hopefully lead to more support in terms of funding and public opinion.
• An inclusive cultural policy will help lead to more creativity and innovation as well as collaboration between different communities.

The Centrality of the Artist
• Supporting the artist as a worker and celebrating their role as the creators of culture is paramount. There is not enough value placed on the arts within Australian culture. First we should foster more appreciation beyond the small audiences and creators that already value it. This can be achieved through the proper recognition of the arts and creative industries including fair pay and awards.
• This pillar is important for improving living conditions and standards for artists through things like Universal Basic Income. In doing this it will also improve the arts industry as less artists will have to work multiple jobs or leave the industry

Strong Institutions
• Arts and culture needs to be facilitated by institutions that take proactive and considered steps in their management and activity. This requires an engaged relationship with artists and audiences to ensure that their programs are mutually beneficial. Strong institutions will create more stability for people within the industry and help make more resources accessible.

Reaching the Audience
• Looking at accessibility is important because it makes a huge difference in inclusivity and diversity. The more accessible these resources are the more creativity and diversity there will be as more people can be reached and get involved. This is also important when considering First Nations Peoples as resources have historically been inaccessible for them.

Are there any other things that you would like to see in a National Cultural Policy?
• Establishing an Australian Production Fund as per the recommendations of the ACTF and ACMA, in which all service providers are required to invest a percentage of their overall revenue generated in Australia. The fund should incorporate a dedicated funding assistance for local children's screen content, recognising the vulnerability and funding challenges of Australian children's content.
• Further to the above, an Australian Production Fund would create more opportunities for sustainable careers in film and television for local talent.
• ACM students believe that arts and culture should have a ministry of its own.
• In line with the logic of interdependence, there is a need to understand the arts and cultural sector through its relationship to other sectors and vice versa. The arts and cultural life of this country needs to be understood as deeply woven into, and interdependent with the rest of society. A National Cultural Policy is not just for the arts and cultural sector, it needs to be understood as for the entire country as a whole. In this way we need to rethink how we understand and relate to the arts and culture in this country.