

National Cultural Policy Submission

Anonymous

Submitted: As an artist

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

The telling of First Nations' stories – across all creative forms – is essential to truth-telling and pursuing a justice agenda in our nation. Priority of First Nations must be retained and actively grown in a culturally-safe way, in recognition of the persistent systemic obliteration of First Nations' stories in post-colonial Australia.

A Place for Every Story

This is important – but who decides legitimacy and validity of these diverse stories? Who deems one form of diversity a greater priority than another? Advisory committees aren't representative of the Australian public, nor can they truly represent 'every story'. If there is truly a Place for Every Story, how do we design a more inclusive process – across both marginalised *and* mainstream voices and communities in this nation – so that stories that are told, published and promoted, are indeed representative.

The Centrality of the Artist

A grand aspiration, but a reality for a select few. For the majority, the artist is not central. Consumer demand, market forces, the priorities of publishers, venues, promoters, middlemen... these trump the artist almost every time. The structure of royalty streams across all art forms reflects the non-centrality of the artist.

Strong Institutions

Creativity cannot be neatly packaged into four-year Federal electoral cycle. Institutions are forced to compete against each other for limited funding pickings, instead of existing with the surety of a comfortably stable funding base which encourages collaboration. Human storytelling – in one form or another – existed in its earliest form alongside other basic human needs: Food. Shelter. Storytelling. Can a national cultural policy demonstrate that supporting strong creative institutions is

imperative to augmenting the strength of health, education and other community institutions?

Reaching the Audience

The audience and demand for Australian stories is growing exponentially, especially since the pandemic. Active support by government to reach international audiences is pivotal for early-career artists operating in the relatively small jurisdiction of Australia.

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

As a writer who is a descendant of colonists, I recognise the primacy of First Nations storytelling and see a stronger First Nations-focused cultural policy as part of truth-telling, reparation, justice and ultimately, a Voice to Parliament.

A Place for Every Story

The voice of lived experience is important, but so are complementary voices that can make additions and connections that amplify lived experience. As an artist, I should not be required to create exclusively from a place of lived experience; I should be able to create from a place of imagination, empathy and perspective. While I am not condoning cultural appropriation, I believe an overly rigid focus on lived experience can inadvertently constrain creativity and silence important amplifying voices.

The Centrality of the Artist

Restructure royalties; lift the threshold of payments for ELR and PLR; actively encourage hybrid models of creating and marketing creative output, including via social enterprise – this would reflect a greater commitment to the centrality of the artist.

Strong Institutions

Strong institutions, with a place for the individual. The Australian Cultural Fund is an important contributor to supporting individual artists, within a robust governance framework, that should be actively promoted and funded.

Reaching the Audience

Federal funding initiatives to artists and through institutions should encompass audience-reaching initiatives (websites, launches, social media promotions, marketing, PR, events etc) in addition to the practice of art-making. How else can a creative reach their audience, if not through direct funding of all steps of the creative process?

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

A recognition that cultural policy cannot be divorced from other forms of national policy design to enhance human wellbeing and economic participation. A thriving creative community in Australia, backed by a robust national cultural policy, will advance national policies across all other Federal portfolios.