

National Cultural Policy Submission

Jack Walton

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

As a worker/professional in an industry who uses arts (e.g. art therapist, tour guide)

As an artist

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

Challenges:

- Restricted population size (3.3%)
- Sustainability issue where orgs only do programs temporarily to appease govt without secure long term strategies

Opportunities:

- Address issues directly through First Nations peak body that is First Nations owned, led and run
- Pathways for First Nations emerging artists - Observership or mentorship programs
- High end quality work being created fit for excellence in international market

A Place for Every Story

Challenges:

- Potential for oversaturated market where organisations feel they must only tell "diverse" stories to be relevant and gain funding (tokenistic use for short term gain)

Opportunities:

- Identifying new talent
- Investment in diverse stories broadening Australia's understanding of its own national

identity and all the nuance that comes with - Expansion of Australian market

The Centrality of the Artist

Challenges:

- Identifying who counts as a full time artist - Company's and individual's lack of wealth generating ability or knowledge

Opportunities:

- Giving long term career artists supplemented sustainable wages for their work
- Longer term grants to individual artists ensure sustainability

- Wealth building & managing education for artists to take advantage of commercial or investment opportunities

Strong Institutions

Challenges:

- Shrinking Funding Pool
- Decreasing number of youth organisations and thus less opportunities for young people to develop
- Reliance on govt funding and philanthropy - Profit share business models keeping the arts poor and ignoring award rates.
- Companies being on lease agreements with their venues mean constant instability and change in the sector making it harder to secure artists and audiences

Opportunities:

- Increasing Funding to Australia Council
- Establishing separate pool in the Australia Council specifically for Youth Arts
- Increasing Pathways
- Establishing investment fund for the arts sector, the profits with which can be used to fund relevant orgs over the long term.
- Increasing investment in what are considered "indie venues" (KXT, Old Fitz, Flight Path Theatre) that support the work of professional artists to ensure performers and crew are paid award rates. Currently there is a massive gap where artists are paid using a profit share model which often leads to no-one being paid or being paid pennies when there is a profit.
- Giving small venues larger seating capacity to grow revenue
- Government buying properties or having a property plan for dedicated arts venues to ensure sustainability

Reaching the Audience

Challenges:

- People moving away from broadcast network television
- Speed of technological development faster than investment and policy reforms
- Private sources of funding minimal in Australia compared to larger markets
- Emerging arts embracing spaces such as NFT's hard to regulate
- Lack of pathways for emerging film makers mean content such as web series having restricted success

Opportunities:

- Australia's potential as a streaming hub if tax offsets and content quotas remain competitive
- Government supported infrastructure projects for film followed by campaigns to encourage private investors to contribute to a growing market. This needs to be government pushed to work
- Investigation into opportunities in the NFT space, especially in terms of artists taking advantage of royalties and potentially replacing record studios as an example. Intellectual Property opportunities are massive in this space
- Investment in AR and VR experiences - Supporting pathways for web series to evolve into fully funded streaming series

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

Ultimately consultation should always be done with First Nations peoples to accurately and regularly address their needs. First Nations stories are vital to our national identity and should be upheld as a priority. I think there should continue to be investment in high end quality productions that support First Nations creatives and their work. Pathways should be established for young First Nations creatives to ensure a strong and certain future full of First Nations stories.

A Place for Every Story

It is clear that our culture should accurately reflect the increasingly diverse Australia. The most recent census perfectly outlines the ongoing trend of increasing diversity, yes with multiculturalism but also in regards to gender diversity and sexual orientation. Having said that, I don't believe these are the only stories that should be told. I think there should be a fair distribution of stories that cater to all walks of life.

The Centrality of the Artist

The support and/or recognition of artists and their creative collaborators is truly what the arts relies on to sustain itself with a sense of purpose and also to remain significant in the eyes of the public. In recent years the arts community has felt beyond neglected. It hasn't even felt like it exists at times with the disappearance of "The Arts" in the last government's portfolio title.

Strong Institutions

As a young emerging artist it has been clear to me just how important the appropriate architecture is to support a sector which holds immense potential. We already know the essential impact of the arts on wellbeing, the economy and national identity. The fact that funding has been decreasing in our Culture, the very essence of what makes us Australian is deeply disheartening. If we want to have a less divisive, more productive and fulfilled Australia we must invest in what makes us who we are.

Reaching the Audience

As we grow technologically as a society the way we interact with arts and entertainment has shifted. To adapt to these evolving market conditions, government and arts bodies need to identify how they will manage and embrace this shift.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Include "Young People's Engagement with the Arts " as a priority of the National Cultural Plan.
2. Establish an ongoing, dedicated funding stream for Young People's Engagement with the Arts for companies whose core business is young people's engagement, administered by the Australia Council for the Arts;
3. Establish targeted, cross-department streams of funding for Young People's Engagement to work with Health and Mental Health, Employment, Youth Justice, Regional Youth and Education – co-managed by the Australia Council

4. Establish Advisory Boards that represent the diversity of young Australians, managed independently, as ongoing standing committees for the Australia Council for the Arts and the Minister for the Arts.