

# National Cultural Policy Submission

Jessie French

I am grateful for this opportunity to offer feedback and to have Federal attention turned to cultural policy. I am also deeply thankful to The Australian government for funding my practice, allowing me to take up opportunities to share my work with global audiences and build my practice into a profession. Government arts funding has afforded me the time, resources and capacity to research, develop, produce, refine and share my work. It would not have been possible otherwise.

Artist's ability to take up opportunities is often dependent on funding. If offered at all, standard fees offered to artists rarely cover costs, instead providing a nominal fee from which the artist is required to fund or personally contribute their own funds to invest in the opportunity.

I offer my feedback as both an artist and holder of a business degree. I mention my business degree because the current funding setup makes it relevant, when it shouldn't be. I'm shocked at how much skill in accounting, marketing, business strategy, budgeting, risk analysis and administration is required of cultural practitioners in order to survive working in this industry professionally.

Australia's cultural sectors are severely undervalued and underfunded. Its cultural policy needs urgent attention to value creative output over administrative capability so that its practitioners may practice rather than perform administrative duties or otherwise fund their practice via participation in work outside the industry or other means.

Industry-wide reliance on free or underpaid labour, systematically excludes those who it is inaccessible to. This has knock-on effects for representation. Which has knock-on effects for participation and engagement.

Critical support is required to support the industry to pay properly for labour, making it accessible to people with greater cultural, gender and socioeconomic diversity, who may live with disability, have caring responsibilities or just be deep in trying to survive in an undervalued and industry after two years of lockdowns.

Thank you for beginning this consultation. Thank you for taking steps to transform and safeguard Australia's creative future.

Sincerely yours  
Jessie French