

# National Cultural Policy Submission

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**Submitted:** As an Artist; As an Individual  
(RMIT Student Associate Degree Professional Writing & Editing)

**Acknowledgment of Country:** I would like to acknowledge the Yalukit Willam Clan of the Boon Wurrung Country and the Kulin Nations, as the Traditional Owners of the land on which I have written my submission.

I respectfully recognise the Elders past, present and emerging throughout Australia as the original communities, creators and storytellers.

I acknowledge and am grateful for the continued dedication to preserve the memories and wisdom sown within the land, sea and spirits; and that we strengthen our resolve for reconciliation so that all voices may be honoured and respected.

**Submission Disclosure:** I come from a position of privilege. I have parents who both financially supported me and allowed me transport and access to The Arts. We had disposable income that allowed us to visit Art Galleries, Theatre Performances, Writer's Festivals, Concerts, Youth Groups, etc.

I attended Primary and Secondary Schools with after-school activities and school curriculums with subjects to focus on and develop my skills in The Arts. I am a University student with the opportunity and support to further my education.

Though I come from a place of privilege, this does not make me immune to the types of struggles all artists encounter.

Because I have had early and constant access to all forms of art on multiple levels, which have positively increased my mental health, strengthened my sense of community and driven my ambitions toward The Arts, I know and vouch for the lifelong benefits The Arts have to offer.

For that, I am grateful to the Australian Government. I am grateful to the organisations dedicated to The Arts, I am grateful for my parents allowing me to experience all arts and cultures, and I am grateful for the teachers and artists who continue to educate and inspire me.

**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**

A New National Cultural Policy Needs:

- To listen and follow through with First Nations requests and rights.
- For organisations to not showcase First Nations Arts for self-promotion but soulfully for reconciliation, education and positive influence.
- To support the original context and stories of First Nations, not compromising them to comply with certain colonial narratives and perceptions.

## **A Place For Every Story**

A New National Cultural Policy Needs:

- Remember that Australia is a multicultural country and that all representation matters.
- To evaluate what stories and forms of identity have been expressed and those which need improvement in accurate representation, equal access and job opportunities.
- To ensure the safety of artists and their right to Freedom of Speech, to be expressed in all forms.
- To amplify and encourage artists' own voices and for all industries to not practice or participate in Cultural and Author Appropriation.
- To break down the White Australian filter and deliberately expand inclusion and acceptance of diversity.
- Acknowledge, support and make clear pathways for all artists with disabilities (physical, learning and mental disabilities)

## **The Centrality of the Artist**

A New National Cultural Policy Needs:

- To abolish the tired illusion that the 'artist' or writer sits alone and produces work and succeeds on their own. It is not one person; it is a community that makes anything and all possible. Nobody can get anywhere in life without support.
- To effectively change the way that arts and culture are valued and should recognise that all artists and writers are essential workers.
- To establish ways the Government can directly improve the working conditions of artists and writers.
- To recognise that as essential workers, we are entitled to the same rights as other workers: fair pay, superannuation, personal and sick leave entitlements, tax-free competitions, Government support, etc.
- To include all artists' careers, pathways, employed, freelancer, and portfolio careers in the Australian Government Census to be fairly represented and accounted for.

## **Strong Institutions**

A New National Cultural Policy Needs:

- To redefine the existing gatekeepers' control and bias to employ more diverse employees.
- To review judges and critics for an accurate and fair assessment of works of diversity.
- To allow people of certain diverse communities to nominate their own judges and critics when it comes to assessing different categories of diversity within The Arts.
- To break down employment barriers between students and job opportunities, perhaps more internship programs with a broader range of diverse candidates.
- To ensure equal and fair wages for all artists despite gender, age, cultural or sexual orientation, employee status, disability, etc.
- To improve work conditions to improve mental health and prevent burnout.

## **Reaching the Audience**

A New National Cultural Policy Needs:

- To recognise that access to art and culture is a fundamental right.
- To evaluate factors that influence access to The Arts, such as disposable income and geographic location.
- All levels of education and schools need more funding and support for the arts.

**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**

Is important to me because:

- As with the acknowledgment of country, reconciliation is crucial.
- As we share this land and sea with them, we must honour their rights and embrace all First Nations Arts.

### **A Place For Every Story**

Is important to me because:

- All Arts and Cultures are essential to humanity. Therefore all artists are essential workers and contributors to humanity.
- Then why do artists have to continue to prove themselves worthy of recognition and funding when our contributions are noted and attributed to us throughout history, in all their diversity?
- Artists have been undervalued and therefore underpaid, but what would we be as a society without art itself? Nothing to look forward to, nothing to see ourselves in or expand our thinking?
- Art allows us to dream, think, connect, and inspire to enhance and improve all aspects of life.
- Art is in our soul and it is in our very nature. It should be nurtured and respected in all forms.
- We will continue to make and tell stories in all art forms and are entitled to the same rights across all diversities.

### **The Centrality of the Artist**

Is important to me because:

- No Australian should have to hear: “Don’t become an artist (writer, musician, designer, etc.); you won’t make any money from that.”
- Imagine a child growing up not having to prove them all wrong, but to grow up with validation and support all around them and treated with the same respect as any other career or ambition.
- Imagine a parent hearing that their child wants to be any kind of artist, and instead of feeling worried, imagine a parent hearing those words and feeling reassured that their child could explore and develop their passions and be financially secure because they knew their child would enter into a healthy cultural ecosystem.

### **Strong Institutions**

Is important to me because:

- The Australian Arts and artists should be supported and secured for all generations.
- The Australian Government and Law has a moral obligation to protect our Arts Institutions and ensure their financial security.

### **Reaching the Audience**

Is important to me because:

- Privilege should not be a barrier or factor to access, participate or profit from The Arts.
- All art forms should recognise, represent and reach every Australian despite income, age, location or cultural or linguistic barriers.

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

Out of all art forms with observation and experience, writers need the most support.

A National Strategy for Literature should be developed, as it already exists for other art forms. To ensure that Australian Literature is sustainable in the future, with fit-for-purpose institutions, fair remuneration, and the provision of secure work, adequate funding needs to be directed to writers and into Literature.

When it comes to the annual funding from the Australian Government and the Australian Council of Arts, I propose a different strategy when distributing the money.

Among the different types of Art Departments and Boards (First Nations arts, community arts, craft, Literature, music, theatre and visual arts), identify which one(s) is the most underrepresented, under-resourced, under-funded or under-compensated (such as Literature and writers) ratio the annual funding accordingly so that the struggling art form(s) get the immediate financial assistance to strengthen their resolve, outreach and profits.

The following year, evaluate each of the departments’ concerns and successes; hopefully, the struggling department will have improved, and this year’s ratio of funding will begin to even out between all art forms. So that we can eventually achieve a more balanced playing field to distribute an equal amount of funding to all art forms. Achieving a future where all Art Departments, Boards and forms are financially equal in value, support and profit.