

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## Essential Screen Skills

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

Essential Screen skills strongly supports the pillar focused on First Nations cultures, histories and artists. As an Arts service organisation who works closely with schools, industry and young people it is evident that there is much needed capability development in teacher confidence for embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and histories, inspiring next generation First Nations screen and media artists and access to contemporary First Nations artists and artworks.

Challenges:

Teacher Capability development, student inspiration and Access

Teachers of screen and media curriculum are required to and would like to authentically embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and histories. To access First Nations artists and screen and media content on a National/State or Local level is challenging. First nations young people and non-indigenous young people would benefit from accessing screen and media products made by First Nations filmmakers however it is challenging to source such material.

Opportunities:

First Nations screen and media storytellers –

Increased funding for First Nations screen and media artists and strategic planning for development, production and distribution for screen and media products that also includes the production of educational resources.

Funding for a service organisation/s to manage a mentor program of established, emerging and student First Nations screen and media artists to ensure there is a continuation of First Nations screen and media artists.

## A Place for Every Story

Essential Screen Skills firmly believes a National Cultural Policy should articulate the requirement of a significant quota of Australian Screen content to be broadcast on all distribution platforms including free to air networks and major streaming services. The continuation of Government funding for local screen content is imperative and we agree with the Make It Australian campaign that Streaming Services should invest 20% of their funds to producing local screen content. A continued focus on developing stories from minority and marginalised groups is needed as well as a platform to access these stories. There must be an emphasis on local (Australian stories) being produced, preserved and accessible.

## **The Centrality of the Artist**

Essential Screen Skills understands and acknowledges that screen and media artists are highly skilled in a wide variety of roles ranging from creative technical skills through to administrative, business, and legal departments. For most artists a sustained career is not a reality and rather contract/production/grant funding based. A National Cultural Policy should ensure the development and implementation of an economic framework that enable screen practitioners to create, participate and prosper sustainably. Furthermore, the development educational resources articulating the the diverse roles and career pathways in the screen industry is imperative to inspire the next generation of screen practitioners.

## **Strong Institutions**

We firmly believe that there needs to be increased funding for the Australian screen industry to enable the development, creation and distribution of Australian stories.

The cuts to funding Arts services have been detrimental and effected the educational sector as many outreach programs were the first to be reduced or removed. As a result we recommend an increase to educational outreach programs for institutions such as ABC Education, SBS Learn and the Australian Children’s Television Foundation.

We recommend that the recent fee increase to Creative Arts university courses should be removed. It is counterintuitive to the spirit of a National Cultural Policy as young people are deterred from pursuing tertiary training in the creative industries.

## **Reaching the Audience**

Essential Screen Skills is concerned with the lack of access to Australian Content. To inspire the next generation of screen artists it is imperative that young people in particular children see themselves in screen content. A strategy for the distribution and access of Australian screen content is highly recommended. All platforms including cinema releases, free to air and streaming services should include in a quota of Australian content.

Australia celebrates screen content through a significant amount of film festivals at local, state, national and international level. We recommend that these film festivals include an education outreach program that targets school-aged audiences where and when appropriate. We also recommend that regional and rural locations are supported through funding film festival local to the area and funding touring film festivals.

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**

Essential Screen Skills view First Nations culture, history, and perspectives as integral to understanding the Australian identity. First Nations stories should be celebrated, understood, and represented authentically. As a country with the oldest culture and first artists it would be remiss not to capture, preserve and cultivate First Nations stories through screen and media products.

## **A Place for Every Story**

Australia is comprised of diverse groups who contribute to shaping national identity. This diversity should be reflected authentically in screen content to ensure that we capture accurately the richness of the diverse voices in Australia.

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

The Australian Screen industry has produced world-renowned artists. Australia is home to highly successful studios and offers a dynamic and diverse range of landscapes as backgrounds for moving image storytelling. It is only fitting that our young people, our future storytellers see that their local industry is robust, sustainable and nurtures their creativity. It is imperative that this National Cultural Policy sends the message that they do not need to go to Hollywood to tell their epic tale.

### **Strong Institutions**

Essential Screen Skills exists to bridge the gap between High School leavers and the Screen industry. Our services rely on collaborative relationships with Tertiary training institutions, production companies and screen organisations. To ensure we can provide young screen and media artists with viable pathways and options we rely on these institutions. It is necessary for the preservation of a National Identity that high school leavers see that there are viable and sustainable career pathways in the screen industry.

### **Reaching the Audience**

Essential Screen Skills exists to engage young people with the industry. A key part to this is to provide opportunities for our stakeholders to see screen products and experience the industry. Film Festivals are integral to the screen experience and enables audiences to see contemporary work and engage with industry practitioners. It also enables filmmakers to share their work with a wider audience.

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

The National Cultural policy should include a 6th pillar that places emphasis on the role of Arts Education in championing the preservation and access to Australian cultural experiences, products and nurturing the next generation of storytellers. This can be executed by providing the much needed funding for Arts Service Organisations such as Essential Screen skills and Arts Teacher Associations who deliver on bridging the cap between school and the creative industries.