

National Cultural Policy Submission

Fenella Joy

About me

I have been working in the arts as a venue manager and theatre technician for more than 20 years, and I have a Master of Business in Arts and Cultural Administration from Deakin University.

Introduction

Arts and cultural expression is the silver bullet.

It has impacts across the board in wellbeing, social cohesion, education, engagement, intellectual stimulation, economic stimulation, and community identity; it creates sustainable and liveable communities; it better equips communities with a voice, agency, and empowerment to participate in the democratic process. There is a link between active arts and cultural expression and thriving communities.

Arts and culture isn't something above us in the distance – it's everything from you-tube videos to open source gaming, from knitting clubs to wearable art, from community choirs to opera, from community museums to symphony orchestras. And everything that contributes to active arts and cultural expression contributes to cultural capacity and artistic vibrancy.

A healthy, vibrant, arts and cultural sector and a culturally active population should be two halves of the same coin – our biggest cultural institution. This should be recognised as a driving force in developing an arts and cultural policy.

Principles

1. That arts and cultural expression be recognised as essential to a healthy and vibrant society and a human right,
2. that arts and culture therefore be recognised as providing a public good, operating outside of market forces, from which all our community benefits,
3. that a healthy arts and cultural sector is therefore recognised as essential to a vibrant and functional society,
4. that the creative industries are recognised to have significant economic benefits, and that the arts and culture sector be recognised as the core and engine of the creative industries,
5. that directly supporting the arts and cultural sector is therefore central to supporting a healthy community, and a healthy economy, with widespread externalities,
6. that supporting cultural capacity is a vital part of supporting a healthy arts and cultural sector and a healthy, vibrant community.

Strategies

1. **A sixth pillar be added to the national cultural policy, recognising that arts and cultural expression, and artistic vibrancy, is essential to a healthy and vibrant society, and a human right.**

Pillar: The centrality of the artist: supporting the artist as worker and celebrating their role as the creators of culture.

2. **Additional funding and support to be provided to promote and develop arts and cultural skills.**
 - a) Arts and cultural careers to be promoted and incentivised, including technical production and arts and cultural management, addressing the loss of skilled workers through the pandemic.
 - Strategies to include incentives such as apprenticeships, and free and reduced fees for training,
 - Incentives to draw technicians and arts workers back to the sector,
 - b) TAFE and university courses in arts, culture, and humanities to be promoted, supported, and incentivised, including technical production and arts and cultural management.
 - Strategies to include incentives such as reducing fees and providing scholarship programmes.
 - c) Secondary school education and career pathways in arts, culture, and humanities to be promoted and supported.
 - d) Arts entities providing education, employment, and traineeship opportunities in arts and culture to receive support.
3. **Artists, artisans and technicians be recognised and protected as workers, and value placed on their skills and expertise.**
 - a) Arts and cultural workers to be recognised and protected as workers.
 - b) Centrelink and other bodies to recognise arts and cultural roles as employment.
 - c) Protections to be developed for casual, contract, and project workers working in arts and culture.
 - d) Board requirements for arts and cultural entities to mandate representation from arts and cultural workers in their field.
 - e) The Australia Council to be empowered to pursue its founding principles.
 - f) The 'arms-length' principle for funding be protected, recognising that expertise in the field is required.
 - g) Arts and cultural jobs, including technical production and arts and cultural management, to be promoted and incentivised.
 - h) Secondary school education and career pathways in arts, culture, and humanities to be promoted and incentivised.
 - i) Income support for artists to recognise professional practice, training, and volunteering, irrespective of income, and mutual obligations to be removed.

- Artists must be enabled to prove arts and cultural practice through portfolio, CV, training, or letter of support, or, optionally, source of income. Proving income should not be the primary criterion.
- j) Income support for arts and cultural workers to be separated from unemployment benefits, recognising the artist's continuous practice and contribution to the community.

Pillar: Strong institutions: providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts and culture.

4. Funding for The Australia Council be increased and protected and the Australia Council to be empowered to pursue its founding principles.

- a) The 'arms-length' principle for funding be protected, recognising that independence and expertise in the field is required.

5. Funding for the ABC and SBS be increased and protected as an essential protection for our cultural voice and our stories.

6. Small to medium arts entities to be supported, funded, and protected, recognising

- a) their creative and community impact,
- b) the diversity and therefore innovation they bring to the sector,
- c) the employment and traineeship opportunities they provide,
- d) their accessibility and contribution to community cultural life.

Pillar: A place for every story: reflecting the diversity of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.

7. Additional funding and support to be provided to protect and empower arts and cultural voices, promote cultural capacity, and develop co-created culture.

- a) Lifelong cultural learning to be promoted.
- b) Primary school education in arts, culture, and humanities to be supported and developed.
- c) Community projects developing arts, culture, and humanities to be supported and promoted. e.g., clubs, libraries, co-curricular programs, adult cultural and arts programmes, community choirs and orchestras, etc.
- e) Arts and community entities providing adult opportunities to explore arts and culture to receive support.
- d) Arts and Cultural news to be presented nightly on the ABC, as with sport and weather
- e) Funding for The Australia Council be increased and protected.
- f) Funding for the ABC and SBS be increased and protected as an essential protection for our cultural voice and our stories.