

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## THEATRE 180

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

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**

THEATRE 180 acknowledges and respects the need for self-determination with respect to First Nations culture and storytelling. We also acknowledge that, for the last 234 years, there have been many other cultures whose stories are interwoven with our indigenous population. We strongly believe the arts to have the best capacity for moving our nation along the path towards reconciliation through storytelling; an opportunity for acknowledging our past, understanding our present and dreaming our future. The opportunities are immense, unlimited and society-changing, the challenges are many, some of which relate to the need for time/money on a project to allow for respectful First Nations engagement and for the conversations to happen which need to happen before the work begins.

### **A Place for Every Story**

Australia is home to many different cultures and enriched by the influence these culture bring to all levels of society. We have in this country a wonderful tapestry of stories and need to ensure we share each interwoven thread that make up the hearts and lives of who we are as a nation, in order to understand and appreciate the value of every one of our citizens, whether First Nation, seventh-generation or recently arrived migrant or refugee. THEATRE 180 has a 30-year experience of collecting and telling oral histories and believes strongly in the place for every story – listening and understanding builds a richer and more empathetic society.

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

Individual artists are as unique as the imaginative forces which drive us all as individuals. To have a robust sector which recognises the value of, and supports the

development and celebration of those people who have the ability to show us who we are as a society, is integral to a healthy and vibrant community. THEATRE 180 has always strived to provide as much work as possible to our creative artists and provide opportunities for them to shine amid the support of a strong ensemble.

## **Strong Institutions**

We need the presence of strong institutions to provide the framework for a robust and vibrant sector. There is a need for the small to medium sector to have the same level of support and continuity of funding as the majors, as this forms a very large part of the sector and provides career pathways for artists. The sector has an immeasurable influence across all aspects of civic life, not just entertainment, including education, health, economy and social cohesion. THEATRE 180 prides itself on being able to play in a variety of spaces, be it theatres, country Town Halls, bespoke venues, cinemas or Senior Centres and Public Libraries. We, like so many other companies, need the financial support which can underpin the bold choices taken to create art and present it to audiences wherever we can find them, and the strength of an institution such as THEATRE 180 relies on the security that triennial funding can provide.

## **Reaching the Audience**

Opportunities to play to audiences here and internationally are vital to the continuation of the sector and presentation of the Australian way of life to our global community. We need the ability to tour our works within our own states, to reach and engage with outer metro and regional communities in the same way we reach our inner-city audiences. We need the capacity to tour our works overseas with the same support which is shown to other areas of the economy such as mining and agriculture. THEATRE 180 is committed to Regional touring and continuing to extend our reach beyond WA and international borders and into new markets.

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

We believe a Universal Basic Income model should be explored. Artists, as evidenced in the exclusion of many in the JobKeeper program, continually fall through the cracks when it comes to Government understanding of how we work and operate within the structure of our sector. There needs to be a greater education within all areas of Government, and a stronger advocacy for the role of artist in society and the need for support. Support for Western Australian institution and artists is also vital as

often we are under-represented in the National conversation. Often this comes down to time and distance and the costs involved in bridging these elements; the challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to unite the country across the borders and create a truly national voice. A National Indigenous Centre in WA would be an excellent start...