

National Cultural Policy Submission

Adelaide Fringe

About Adelaide Fringe:

Adelaide Fringe is the biggest arts festival in the southern hemisphere! For 31 summer days and nights, it transforms Adelaide and South Australia. It stretches from Whyalla to Naracoorte, with eclectic and vibrant events, including cabaret, theatre, comedy, circus, music, visual arts, workshops and more. Adelaide Fringe was born in 1960 and attracts audiences aged from 1 to 100+ years. It's a true collaboration and co-creation between artists, venues and communities. Adelaide Fringe is a registered not-for-profit open-access festival. This means we don't have a curator handpicking our program and 100% of the box office goes back into the pockets of artists and venues. This means that anyone can register an event in Adelaide Fringe! We facilitate relationships between artists and venues to create a festival that transforms the state. We believe in challenging artists to be brave and audiences to be braver. The Adelaide Fringe office is located on Kauria Land.

Adelaide Fringe is an incubator for local talent with over 50% of our Festival made by local artists annually (in COVID years 70%+). We offer pathways for artists to build independent careers in the arts, find audiences and tour their work internationally. Through our monthly professional development series, collaborations that support residencies and opportunities within the South Australian small to medium arts organisations and the Honey Pot International Arts Marketplace which sees hundreds of delegates from all over the world come to Adelaide Fringe to network, and buy work leading to millions of dollars of deals made annually for artists to export and tour their work.

What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you?

First Nations: recognising and respecting the crucial place of these stories at the centre of our arts and culture.

- We recommend the development of a peak body or service organisation for First Nations arts and culture, to guide us and have a voice in policy and decision making. Work must be put into creating a culturally safe space for this peak body and ensure it has broad geographic variability, and is not unfairly focused on cities or the eastern states.
- We need to recognise the experience of lateral violence that may occur within First Nations communities, as a result of disadvantage, discrimination and oppression and that we need to listen, learn and relearn, be open to changing structures, protocols and governance models, and be flexible to new ways of working.
- Building a peer to peer network is a must and investing in cultural protocols and understanding is essential.
- The leadership and strategy around First Nations must be self-determined, and acknowledge different ways of working and leading, as equal or better than the current systems, and must be embedded across all levels from artists, to staff to boards and governments.
- We recommend prioritised funding for First Nations voices and leadership.
- Prioritised pathway programs for First Nations artists and arts workers, with a focus on a national mentorship program, residencies, leadership training and professional development opportunities made available through grants and special programs.
- We look forward to the outcomes of the upcoming Purrumpa First Nations arts and culture gathering on Kauria country in 2022.

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

- All Australians do not have access to participate in arts and culture, often only those who can afford to. Those who may have access to housing, family support or intergenerational wealth are usually the ones that can maintain a full time arts practice. Especially in early career artists. We must look to offer a universal basic income for artists, providing what is needed to make everyone equal. This will see an increase in diversity in cultural identity, age and abilities in the arts sector rather than the current model that represents those with privilege.
- It should also be noted that an investment in artists through a universal basic income model will facilitate greater output from the industry and export opportunities with Australian arts and culture. Through our Honey Pot International Arts Marketplace data we can confirm a huge appetite for Australian work internationally, if we invest

now we will see a ROI in future years with an increase in Australian work bought / programmed for international, stages, venues and galleries.

- We recommend the strategic and ongoing dedication to identifying and removing barriers to ensure everyone has the opportunity to take part in all areas and at all levels from Festivals, to independent practice: from who can participate and what stories they can tell, to where they're from, what they do, and what roles or art forms they choose. Art is for everyone and we need to ensure that.
- We must celebrate and prioritise Australian work that depicts the authentic, lived experiences of people from marginalised and under-represented groups, and allow it to be self-determined and independent, by removing the gate keepers.
- We recommend a new national Cultural Policy work with State, Territory and Local Governments in order to impact and be accessible for all Australians, regardless of where we live. This includes initiatives and investment to address the ongoing disparities between cities and regional areas, and between Sydney/Melbourne and everywhere else.
- We recognise venues play an important part in the arts and cultural ecosystem but are often left out of arts funding models. Offering support to arts and cultural venues to upgrade facilities that enable people to participate is essential. In 2021 Adelaide Fringe commissioned a study on the barriers artists with a lived experience of disability experienced to participate. The number 1 reason was venue accessibility, access to stages, back of house areas, quiet spaces, and climate control are just some of the things we need to focus on upgrading if we are to have a place for every story.
- We also need to understand the intersection of these community groups, we must work to include everyone in the conversation and acknowledge that many people identify in multiple marginalised groups which leads to greater inequality.

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

- Alongside the current project-based model, arts funding should investigate and trial better ways of employing artists in more secure forms of work. It must recognise artists and cultural workers as essential workers, with the same rights as those in other industries – be that through a minimum basic income scheme, wage standards, job guarantees, fellowships, public employment opportunities, other forms of income support.
- We support the opportunity to deliver a similar scheme to *Ireland's Basic Income for the Arts pilot scheme* in Australia.
- Increasing residencies, mentorships and opportunities to give artist the opportunity to practice their art form with a regular income rather than outcome based project income is important to the sustainability of our sector.
- Increasing access to funding for mid-career artists is important, there seems to be a priority on emerging and established artists and a gap between where we see large amounts of artists leave the industry to change careers, in order to gain financial security.
- We support the implementation of artists in residence at schools, community groups and civic buildings. However an artist in residence is about having an arts practice, in a studio or similar within which the artist works. Artists in residence should not be asked to perform other tasks within the residency, eg artists in residence in schools are not teachers and though they may be able to teach, asking them to teach (eg, song writing lessons) belittles the integrity of a career artists, and perpetuates the idea that being a professional practicing artists is not enough.

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

- Strong institutions require significant and stable investment. State and Local Governments have offset some of the last seven years of Federal arts funding cuts, but overall investment in Australian arts and culture still isn't matching our growing population. By international standards, we rank in the bottom quarter of OECD countries. We must recognise both the economic and cultural impact the sector achieves and fund it accordingly. Before COVID-19, Australia's cultural and creative activity contributed nearly \$112 billion with Australia Council recently reporting the sector employed 645,000 people, or 6% of the workforce, yet our funding model by international standards, ranks in the bottom quarter of OECD countries (investing just 0.9% of GDP in arts and culture in 2019). We need to amplify the positive impacts of arts and creativity on Australia's culture, society and economy as we recover from the impacts of Covid-19 – and this will need increased focus and significantly more investment from the Australian Government.
- Festivals are an important part of the sector and should be acknowledged as such within the new cultural policy. With hundreds of arts and cultural Festivals operating in Australia annually the current funding model neglects to acknowledge the support these Festivals need and the impact they make. The Major Festivals Initiative supports just one predefined festival in each city, and Festivals Australia supports regional work – but there is no federal funding program to support some of our most significant and impactful festivals. Especially when many of these Festivals are doing the heavy lifting in developing and showcasing local talent.
- As part of the cultural policy framework federally funded organisations should require minimum operational standards in order to secure funding, including a Reconciliation Action Plans that confirm ongoing community consultation and

respect of cultural protocols and Human Resource teams that are embedded in workplace culture. Alternatively, a national framework that oversees and offers services to small to medium sector organisations, so conflicts, workplace harassment and other discriminations are managed rather than ignored. Joint access to services such as Employee Assistance Programs are particularly relevant to workers who go contract to contract and have to navigate the challenges of inconsistent and turbulent contract employment.

- We recommend an investment in skills sharing, collaboration and pathway programs for arts workers, that will support the removal of systemic barriers and increase participation in the workforce from marginalised communities. This funding needs to be considered on a long term basis (3-5 years) as the impacts and outcomes will take time to evolve. For example Adelaide Fringe has been working with [Arts Ready](#) to recruit an identified First Nations trainee role twice annually for a number of years, with benefits to both Adelaide Fringe and the trainee. To address the under-representation of First Nations people, people of colour and Deaf and Disabled people employed in the arts, especially in leadership positions we need a pro-active approach. Paid leadership training, mentorship and succession planning is important in building a pipeline of workers and defining pathways is essential to the sustainability of our sector.

Reaching the audience: ensuring our stories reach the right people at home and abroad.

- We recommend the prioritisation of authentic stories told by those who have lived the experiences those stories contain (across all art forms), particularly from those whose voices have been ignored or marginalised in the past. This is especially relevant when looking at funding artists and commissioning new works, making sure that the artists has complete and remaining control over their story and not the commissioner. Diversifying the work on the stages will diversify our audiences.
- Government led collaboration opportunities between many sectors including but not limited to Arts, Health, Sports and Recreation, Regional Development, and Education to share skills and resources can build audiences. Developing frameworks for collaboration and acknowledging the intersection of our communities will build stronger networks.
- We recommend looking at alternative value models for funding that serve the audience and support their needs and wants. We need to recognise the festivals, events, and exhibitions that attract a large amount of audience that are currently valued by economic impact should be valued because of the audience it attracts. Part of the value of an arts and cultural organisation should be around the audience it serves. At Fringe give opportunities for people to express themselves on their terms both as an artist and audience, this is essential and important. It also empowers artists to have a voice that isn't curated, adapted or moulded by the person, venue or festival booking that artists, and empowers the audience to take a chance and engage in a different way.
- We recommend the new cultural policy investigates facilitating an annual conference for arts marketers and audience development staff, similar to APAM or Mumbrella but for arts communicators; an industry gathering showcasing and sharing industry knowledge from peer to peer networks and offering the ability to build collaborative campaigns, share resources, and builds connectivity between cultural institutions and their audiences.
- We recommend the implementation of minimum quotas for Australian content on film and TV streaming services, and recognize how important it is to have access to Australian stories in order to build our cultural identity.

4. What other things would you like to see in a National Cultural Policy?

- A deeper understanding of the export potential of Australian work, how can we make and support work to have a long legacy, and tour globally for many years building stronger institutions and artist career pathways. We need to invest in the arts sector as we would the wine industry or other major exports. It has potential to drive a huge economic boost to the country. Funding participation from Australian artists at within in Festival marketplaces like Edinburgh Fringe and Adelaide Fringe is essential to building sustainable touring platforms. We need to move away from the constant need to create new work, and be innovative in order to gain project funding. The impact of always funding new work or to fund a new project is unsustainable and exhausting.
- Investing in the next generation of artists, arts workers and audience is essential. We have the capacity to build integrity and honesty about a country and culture, one that values artists as a necessity to culture, curiosity and wellbeing, embedding this as a priority in education and curriculum is essential.
- Festivals and pop up or temporary venues are important to the ecosystem and touring models. We need to recognise their importance the same way we consider venues of certain size ratios in regional areas a necessity for touring models. Festivals are an essential part of the fabric that builds independent practice and opportunity. Capacity building opportunities to run venues during festivals and funding for festivals themselves is essential, while the recent RISE funding model had its challenges it did for the first time offer support to a major part of the industry that had until now been largely forgotten in the Federal arts policy and funding model.