



National Cultural Policy Submission

NETS Australia

1. Are you submitting this submission (tick all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of an arts peak body
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About National Exhibition Touring Support (NETS) Australia

NETS Australia is a network of exhibition touring agencies funded by state and federal governments to work closely with Australian public galleries. NETS Australia provides a coordinated national approach to touring exhibition programming with an emphasis on regional and remote access.

The seven state and territory-based NETS agencies vary in their composition and most operate through host cultural organisations based in the visual art sector. The network comprises: Museums & Galleries of New South Wales (MGNSW), Artback NT, Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD), Country Arts SA, Contemporary Art Tasmania (CAT), National Exhibitions Touring Support Victoria (NETS Victoria), and Art on the Move (WA).

The network is small, efficient and responsive and operates across all states and territories with a combined full-time equivalent staff of 14.2 persons working in strategic partnerships with major cultural institutions, public and regional galleries, Aboriginal art and culture centres, artists and collectors to develop high quality exhibition, public programs and professional development content.

The network supports the development of a National Cultural Policy and are pleased to provide this submission.

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

Smaller regional and remote public galleries often are under-resourced and unable to fully engage First Nations' programming, participation and employment. Supporting NETS Australia agencies to employ First Nations project personnel will:

- increase First Nations' employment, cultural leadership capacity and participation;
- assist regional galleries (without First Nations staff) to build cultural safety / awareness training in and around their organisation and program offers, and facilitate First Nations-led programming and policy;
- ensure cultural material is handled, presented and understood in ways that are respectful and appropriate;
- support access to and understanding of First Nations cultural material and knowledges for regional and remote audiences; and
- strengthen connections between First Nations communities and galleries in regional and remote areas.



Artback NT



COUNTRY
ARTS
SA

Museums
& Galleries
of NSW

museums
& galleries
QUEENSLAND

NETS
VICTORIA



ART ON
THE MOVE

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

NETS Australia recommends public galleries and touring agencies are strategically and financially supported to develop cultural material relevant to communities of interest and for marginalised communities. Regional Galleries are cultural hubs, safe spaces and meeting places for their communities who are some of the most diverse culturally, economically and in ability. Touring programs provide vital access to cultural material relevant to this diverse audience: audiences with access needs, First Nations peoples, CALD communities, young people and older Australians, ensuring all have equitable access to contemporary culture. Increased support for these targeted programs also builds awareness around diversity in wider regional audiences.

To ensure diversity is central to Australian culture, diversity must be represented on boards and in the artistic leadership that steers the direction of the arts. Current public governance models favour the privileged and need to be rethought to remove obstacles to participation, through providing remuneration to First Nations and unsalaried, independent Board members.

To reach remote communities and smaller institutions and centres, digital literacy and access to alternative ways of viewing culture is fostered through touring exhibitions of digital artworks and online programs.

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

NETS Australia endorses the Code of Practice under development by NAVA and their advocacy in supporting fair remuneration for artists and their practice.

We create employment opportunities for artists and encourage an expansion of remunerated public program engagements for artists in subsidised touring exhibitions to increase their value to both regional and remote audiences and for artist communities.

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

Strengthening the national exhibition touring infrastructure is critical to sustaining the flows of cultural exchange into the regions and across the nation. Stagnating funding for touring organisations has been in existence since additional support to 'develop audiences, demand and access in regional areas' recommended by the 2002 Myer Report went unsupported. To strengthen the network and assist us to contribute to sustainability and build sector capacity across Australia's networks of public galleries, we strongly recommend:

- public funding models that enable longer-term planning and funding cycles, and that are set on stronger base-financial support
- increased program funding to provide First Nations consultation and leadership support, conservation practices, and specialist expertise in both cultural and technical content that regional organisations may not normally be able to afford or access.
- introducing parity across employment conditions for arts workers across the states and institutions to encourage the retention of staff and their expertise within the field, and



Artback NT



**Museums
& Galleries
of NSW**



**NETS
VICTORIA**



**ART ON
THE MOVE**

- strengthening environmentally sustainable practices alongside growing a strong ethical culture across the national sector

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

We recommend support for NETS Australia to pilot a program that enables state-based agencies - working as either individual or collaborative agents - to develop and deliver 3 x international touring exhibitions over 5 years. The pilot will assist the development of new skills and knowledge in the field of international touring to be shared across the network, and growing new audiences and markets for contemporary Australian art and artists abroad.

Regional and remote audiences and communities of interest will gain valuable connection from touring First Nations and diverse artists and their artworks to regional centres to connect with local First Nations and diverse audiences and grow their national networks of artists.

Support associated programming and educational components for touring exhibitions that can be hosted online or serve as outreach programs to enable greater regional and remote access to contemporary art and national stories, as well as for international engagement.

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

- NETS Australia advocates for the development of a National Cultural Policy that:
 - identifies strategies for strengthening the sector through investment, education and infrastructure that can reach to regional and remote settings;
 - uses the expertise of the sector to coordinate cooperation between local, state and federal governments;
 - provides a vision for a future in which Australia’s creative achievements and stories are celebrated as newsworthy events, and Australia is recognised as a global leader in culture and the arts.
- Government investment is raised to be commensurate with the creative and cultural industries’ significant economic and non-economic contribution to Australia and be applied to the sector to facilitate long term planning, leveraging of investment, implementation of best practice and safeguarding the workforce.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics is supported to work with the creative and cultural sector to establish applicable data sets that provide reliable and current economic data to strengthen an understanding of the sector’s economic impact and inform its future planning.
- National standards and protocols for the digitisation of creative and cultural content (beyond collections and archives) be developed in consultation with the sector and applied by all national cultural institutions.

5. ✓	Name: Michael Edwards Organisation (if applicable): NETS Australia Contact (email or phone): [REDACTED]
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