

National Cultural Policy Submission

Visual Arts Educators of South Australia

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

Visual Art Educators of South Australia, are an elected committee which represents practicing Visual Arts teachers from both independent, Catholic and public education sectors of South Australia. We provide leadership, training, workshop opportunities and a voice for our profession. This survey was completed by Jackie Reichstein, current President of VAESA,

First Nations

It is hugely important to give value to First Nations in the Visual Arts curriculum in schools, but this is often approached poorly by non-First Nation teachers. We at Visual Arts Educators of South Australia believe that there should be state or federal funding available, to access and appropriately pay Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to come into schools to talk from their lived experiences and perspectives. Currently, we see many examples of well-meaning tokenism and copying of traditional symbols, and wish to amend this reoccurring mis-appropriation.

Additionally, to have national guidelines for working with Aboriginal art and artists, which go out to all education institutions and provide sensitive advice about what is good practice. We are aware of current workshops and training in South Australia where a sheet of traditional symbols is being handed out to workshop participants to copy and use them to create their own art work. This isn't acceptable. However, because it's done through a workshop at an Aboriginal cultural centre, people think it's ok to do this in classrooms. We believe a national approach with common guidelines would better support educators and Aboriginal Artists.

We believe a national push to create more opportunity for First Nation Artists to share practice and tell their story is key. Making Aboriginal Artists own lived

experience and voice a strong part of educational practices and curriculum would increase understanding and value.

The Centrality of the Artist

It would be helpful to know the best emerging artists from around Australia who work in different media and genres. We often only know local people and ones who exhibit in our state Biennial and other teachers, because teachers are so busy and overloaded in schools it's hard to keep up with emerging artists on a national level. An online best practice gallery which is regularly updated would also support this.

Strong Institutions

We would like to see The Arts valued in schools as equal to other subject areas.

The Arts have got a poor deal in the Australian Curriculum as we have had our time reduced. It is recommended that South Australian students get 40 minutes of Arts a week, in schools. We have 5 Arts subjects, Media, Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts. This equates to less than 10 minutes a week. This is having huge impact on our future Arts practitioners and wellbeing of young people as they lose storytelling, they lose tribe that is created through collaborative arts practice and they lose resilience through learning through doing and problem solving. At Visual Arts Educators we have tried to raise our voice around this issue and have asked how we can make things more equal. Why is PE compulsory until the end of year 10 but not Arts?

As we are a volunteer organisation, run by full-time teachers who work in schools it is often tricky to meet our every day demands as well as fighting for time in the curriculum on a National Level. We would like support in raising our voice about the benefits of Visual Arts in schools. We wish we could fund an advertising campaign for the Arts on the benefits for the whole human. We need more value placed on our subjects in schools and in life to help make a flourishing human.

We would like to see:

- A mandatory visual arts curriculum taught by specialist teachers in all schools from early years to senior years.
- A reversal of fee increases to Creative Arts university courses and an equitable tertiary education system that doesn't target Creative Arts degrees with fee increases on the false basis that they do not lead to employment.

- Support for universities and TAFEs to expand delivery of professional practice units for all arts students.
- An industrial Award rate for the visual arts and craft, which legislates the payment of artists' fees.
- Awarding of public arts funding to be dependent on the payment of visual artists at or above minimum standard rates as set out in NAVA's Code of Practice, and that funding amounts can support these rates

Reaching the Audience

As we represent teachers who teach Visual Arts in remote locations who are very disadvantaged due to access. We would like to see:

- Government funded bursaries for regional and remote schools to attend our national and state-run galleries.
- Government funded grants for regional and remote schools to pay for accommodation and child-care support for artists-in-schools.
- NBN blackspots to be fixed.
- A boost to the Community Heritage Grants (CHG) program funding to properly digitise collections and license images of artwork for sharing on Trove.
- Investment in new funding to support the professional presentation of Australian artists, artworks, and exhibitions in the digital space, ensuring artists' copyright is protected and they are paid ongoing publishing fees for their content.

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

We would like to see a stronger link made between Arts and Wellbeing. Arts improve wellbeing through linking to tribe, overcoming failure through creative practice, which builds resilience and gives voice and story. We are currently getting students in high school who have touched nothing but computer screens and can't cope with following a journey of discovery with their learning through any other medium. They just want to be right, making no mistakes, and get anxiety when the path is not fully lit by teachers. We need to encourage more creative play and hard fun which builds brave learners.