

National Cultural Policy Submission

Submission Authors:

[Associate Professor Susan Kerrigan](#), Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria.

[Professor Phillip McIntyre](#), University of Newcastle, NSW.

We are making this submission as individuals and independent researchers.

This submission addresses Pillars 3, 4 and 5, *The Centrality of the Artist, Strong Institutions* and *Reaching the Audience*. These three pillars align well with our concept of a 'creative system in action' particularly the idea of a creative ecosystem. This creative system in action connects the artist with cultural intermediaries that exist inside strong institutions and the audiences they interact with, as well as the knowledge necessary to operate inside this system. When combined these 3 pillars thus represent for us a psycho/bio-socio-cultural creative ecosystem. These ideas have been developed through academic and industry-oriented research which has been conducted by the authors across Australia since 2014. The research was focused on the creative and cultural industries, and specifically creative economies in regional creative hotspots. It included a spotlight on the Arts, as well as the Media, Design and Information Technology sectors.

When addressing the challenges and opportunities of these three pillars, the authors of this submission recognise the *Artist* as a creative agent who is a central figure in the development of Australian culture. Our research has revealed that the work of the Artist is deeply intertwined with the commercial and non-commercial sectors which creates outputs that are meaningful to *Australian and international audiences*. To maintain creative, innovative and engaging outputs, the Artist needs to be supported by *strong cultural institutions* that reflect cultural trends and movements of our diverse Australian population.

This submission will draw on independent research findings from two Australian Research Council Linkage Grants. These views do not reflect the opinions of the institutions that the authors are employed in. The research projects were:

- [Creativity and Cultural Production in the Hunter: An Applied Ethnographic Study of New Entrepreneurial Systems in the Creative Industries](#) (McIntyre, Balnaves, Kerrigan, King, & Williams, 2019)
- [Australian Cultural & Creative Activity: A Population & Hotspot Analysis](#) (Cunningham, Hearn, McIntyre, Kerrigan, Ryan and McCutcheon, 2020).

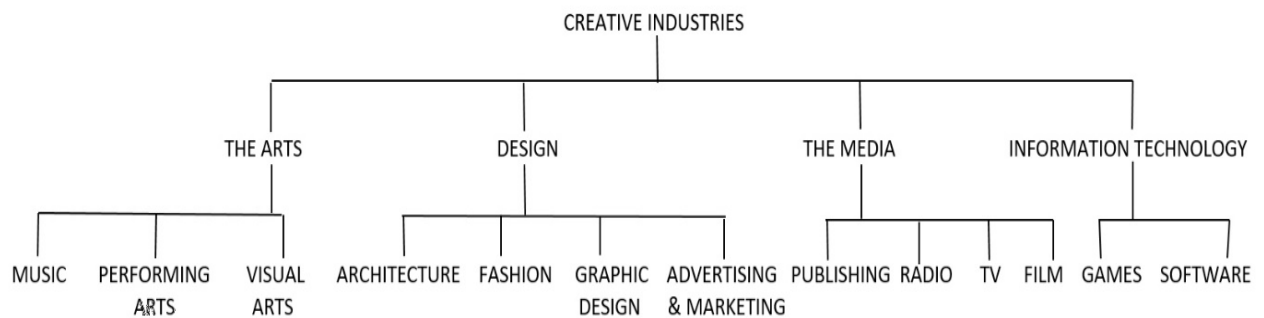
Both research projects were conducted with Industry Partners¹ and drew on Australian Census employment data and more than 600 in-depth interviews with artists, designers, musicians, writers, filmmakers, and many others, including representatives of cultural institutions such as regional councils, state agencies, galleries, libraries and museums.

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED FROM THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES RESEARCH INCLUDED:

¹ Industry partners included Arts Queensland, Create NSW, Creative Victoria, Culture, Arts South Australia, Western Australian Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, as the state based industry partners and two Hunter industry partners Newcastle Business Improvement Association (Newcastle Now) and TechnicaCTP.

Clarifying the nomenclature around the terms ‘Art and Culture’, ‘Cultural Industries’ and ‘Creative Industries’:

- A clearer understanding of the conceptual structures and how they are applied colloquially, on-the-ground, and anecdotally through social structures, should significantly decrease tensions and misunderstandings between layers of government and cultural institutions. Without rehearsing the debates around the terminology, for the purposes of this submission we will use the abbreviated term ‘creative industries’ to stand in for the term ‘creative and cultural industries’. With that caveat in place, we understand that the term ‘creative industries’ includes all those sectors amalgamated within the four broad subdivisions of design, media, IT, and the arts (Flew 2012, p. 4). When there are misunderstandings around these terms and the relationships between the artist, institutions and audiences, it can lead to deeply held animosity between cultural institutions, and perpetuate ongoing debates and ‘turf-wars’ around privilege and entitlement. Hence, more clarity around the naming conventions to be adopted in this policy will be a challenge, but it is essential in order to justify the commercial and non-commercial production of culture that aims to support traditional artists and those working in global digital economies. A simple outline of the sectors of the creative industries such as that outlined in Figure 1, could help with such challenges.



*Figure 1 Creative industries represented as a set of sectors.
(from McIntyre, Balnaves, Kerrigan, King and Williams 2019, p. 78).*

Accurately defining who *The Artist* is and what they do in the 21st Century Digital Economy:

- Typically, *The Artist* is located as a creative worker in ‘The Arts’ sector (see Figure 1). However, the term artist is frequently commandeered and applied to other cultural and creative sectors like Design, Media and Information Technology. The challenge here is to re-define the term *The Artist* to include the traditional designation for certain types of cultural producers and creative workers operating in the digital age. Such an inclusive definition could remove the Romantic notions appended to an idea of the artist as sole creator of national or global creative or cultural products. In a contemporary global culture this is perilous. Romantic ideals of an artist free from constraints no-longer apply to the contemporary practices of 21st Century creative workers and it has become imperative that this latter understanding of an artist is outlined in a national cultural policy. It needs to clearly include all those creative and cultural workers who are highly important figures in helping create a sense of ourselves as a nation and are central to our efforts in projecting that identity through our efforts at cultural diplomacy.

Example’s of high profile Artists, who call themselves by other terms are, for example, Paul Kelly (songwriter), Richard Tognetti (musician), Baz Lurhmann, Rachel Perkins and Warwick Thornton (film-makers), Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe and Cate Blanchett (actors), Barry Humphries (actor comedian), Helen Garner (writer), Stan Grant (journalist), Glenn Murcutt and Harry Seidler (architects), Phillip Adams (writer, film maker and radio personality), Alex Perry (fashion designer), Grace Cossington Smith and Brett Whiteley (artists), Max Dupain (photographer), Patrick White

and Colleen McCullough (novelists), Anh Do (artist and television personality) and Matt Hall (games designer).

- Audiences must have access to the creative and cultural products made by these Artists in order for a profit to be returned to themselves and the investing businesses and cultural bodies. It is worth noting here that the hierarchical representation of the creative industries as a set of sectors (Figure 1) could have, firstly, another layer scaled down to sectors that subsist under these others. This is where creative and cultural outputs could be found. For example, under publishing there would be books, magazines, print, zines, blogs, social media etc. and then at a lower scale list the occupations that are associated with each of them such as journalist, editor, publisher, printer, writer and so on. Graphic design would include UX design, animation, illustration and the many other hybrids that are proliferating in this area. Visual arts might include painting, sculpture, digital art, soundscapes, photography and so on. Advertising and marketing might also include another layer pointing to advertising agencies, design agencies, public relations, strategic communication and a number of others. Radio would include all forms of broadcast and narrowcast radio, including, free-to-air, digital radio, podcasting and streaming services like Spotify. This is true of each of the eleven sub-sectors of design, the media, IT and the arts. Secondly, the creative ecosystem could also be scaled upward so that creative industries themselves sit alongside agriculture, mining, health, education, finance, manufacturing, biotechnology, construction and all the other industries, all of which make up various parts of the Australian economy.

Creating a cultural policy that helps local councils to develop cultural plans that are effective and actionable and that do more to favour the growing digital sector:

- Local councils like those in Bendigo and Ballarat have appointed creative industries officers who have a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes the creative industries many regional councils in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, are still conflating the creative industries with the arts alone and acting accordingly.
- There is a similar situation for a number of Regional Development Officers working at the State level whose briefs may include only a partial focus on the economic importance of the creative industries. However, entities like Creative Victoria are fully cognisant of the breadth and depth of the creative industries supporting all sectors well. For example, their support of Games as a creative industries sector, among others, has been admirable with the State of Victoria benefitting tremendously as a result.

The provision of adequate infrastructure support, for example, the NBN is in desperate need of improvement in many regional and metro areas.

- Better NBN services will allow the regions to compete globally but also to stimulate creative migration and encourage the movement out of the overly congested metropolitan areas.
- Adequate infrastructure support from all levels of government in relation to creative industries will encourage and support internal and export trade and in terms of the countries Balance of Trade.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED FROM THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES RESEARCH:

Representing the Creative industries as a Creative Ecosystem

- The creative ecosystem (see Figure 2 below) should be seen to be a set of interrelated sectors that are supported by strong institutions where creative and cultural products are produced for local and global audiences.

- There are opportunities to begin embracing the complexity of the creative ecosystem and accepting that the creative industries are all those industries which use signifying practices to intentionally produce symbolic artefacts for the purposes of commercial gain. These activities can be seen to occur inside an ecosystem that includes volunteers, audiences, amateurs, pro-ams and professionals as well as creative and embedded specialists and support works. It needs to be recognised that the central component of the creative ecosystem might appear to be culturally focused, but research shows that the creative and cultural benefits permeate out to other economic sectors like Health, Agriculture, Mining, Sport and to retail, manufacturing and education.
- Seeing this complexity as an opportunity should allow for support to be delivered through strong institutions that understand the complexities faced by agents and structures operating in creative ecosystem. The ecosystem can be described by three defining features:
 - **Creative Agents** – here they are called artists, but really it represents individuals and groups who contribute, through their creative actions to our culture;
 - **Creative Outputs** – includes all creative artefacts that embody the codes and conventions of our culture and can be seen as vehicles for symbolic messages because they carry meaning for audiences and cultural intermediaries;
 - **Social, Cultural, and Economic Capital** – Creative Agents and Outputs when appreciated by local and global audiences have the potential to create copyright and intellectual property that belongs to creative agents who operate individually or in groups.
- By viewing the creative economy as something that is significant to both our cultural lives and to our economy will mean it can be visible to all levels of government to aid in sustaining ongoing non-commercial support and commercial infrastructure across all eleven sectors.

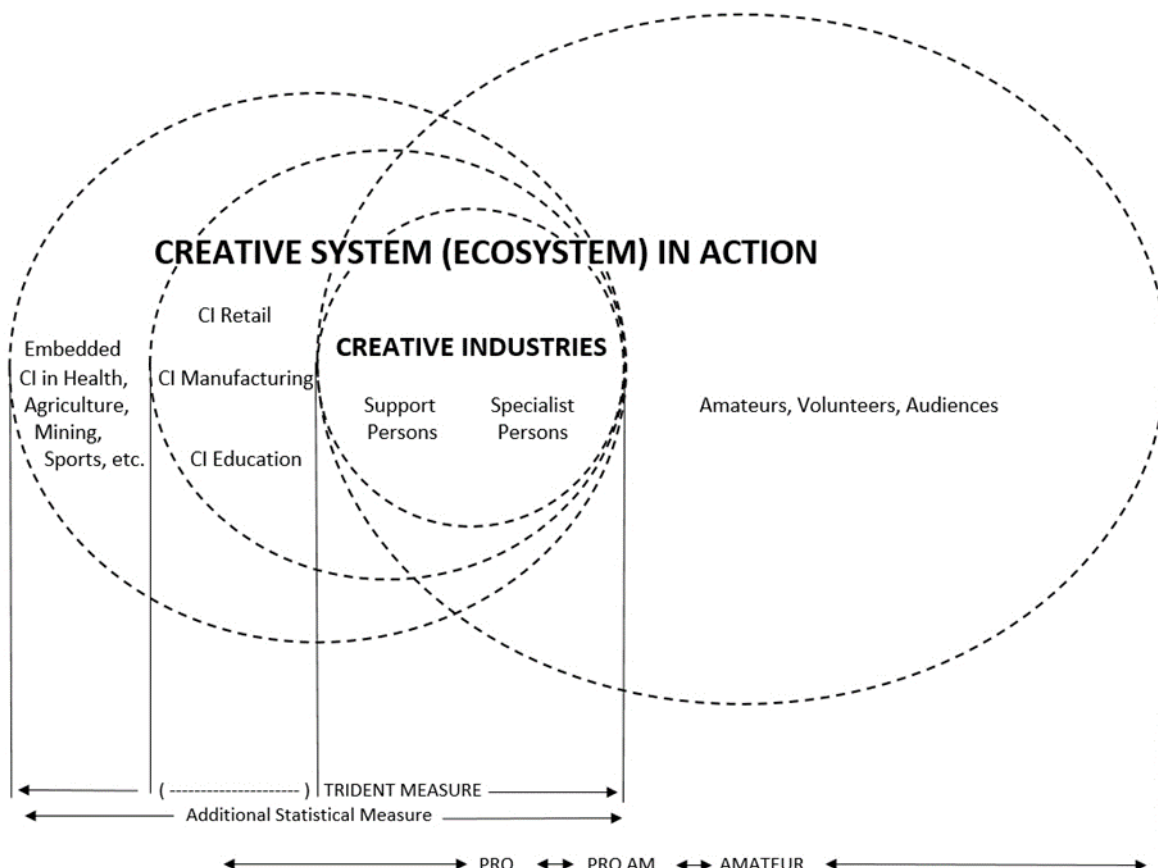


Figure 2 Creative System [Ecosystem] in Action
 (from McIntyre, Balnaves, Kerrigan, King and Williams 2019, p. 10).

- This is a jobs-rich area of the economy, and it should be supported to help the currently shrinking jobs in the manufacturing markets. One way to firmly identify this would be to adjust the Australian census data collection to include secondary incomes rather than concentrating on primary income. Such a mechanism would provide more accurate information about how creative workers survive and how they operate at the beginning of their careers and, as they progress, balance lifestyle choices with creative work.
- It is noteworthy that gentrification brought on by developers has pushed creative workers out of CBD's and other easily affordable areas. Local and state government need to be encouraged to protect small creative ecosystems and hubs like Marrickville, for social and cultural reasons as much as economic ones.

Supporting Creative Migration, of creative workers moving into the regions, by heavily investing in and upgrading digital services and the National Broadband Network provides a number of opportunities.

- The regional creative drain, which was once prominent, is being reversed with many creative workers moving back to the regions to live and raise a family. In doing so they bring to these regions an international level of expertise and a desire to continue to operate at that level. Many creative migrants are surprised by what they found in the regions and have generally relished the lifestyle opportunities it affords.
- Observations and in-depth interviews completed across the research projects set out above revealed that quite a number of creative industries operatives are 'glocally' oriented, that is, many of them are locally embedded but globally active.
- There needs to be a more nuanced understanding that the creative industries in the regional areas plays a more important role in communities than just the jobs they provide. Creative industries play a role in the attraction and/or retention of regional populations and this can be seen in Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, Albury/Wodonga, Coffs Harbour, Wollongong and Marrickville. The institutions that support the creative industries, made up of creative services businesses as well as cultural institutions that make arts and culture more publicly accessible, have been found to be highly valued in regional centres because they provide lifestyle opportunities for regional residents. Cultural institutions make a significant contribution to regional populations and they are also vital for broader socioeconomic vibrancy of regional communities supporting and using the creative services sectors.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY INCLUDE:

- The Federal Government should invest in wireless satellite networks to properly service regional Victoria and New South Wales as the regional roll-out of the NBN has not been beneficial for many regional businesses.
- Better NBN connections are also needed in many capital cities and metropolitan areas to support creative retail outlets and the live music scene.
- Recognising the significant growth rate in Creative Industries employment must be supported through close examination of the consequences of gentrification on inner city precincts like Marrickville, in Sydney. This needs to be reviewed by local and state government rezoning permissions.
- Advise all levels of government that a determination be made to encourage further policy and funding support for artist-owned spaces.
- Cultural diversity is being celebrated in regional areas for example, Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong and the Surf Coast and this could be amplified through well-supported cultural policies.

- Post-industrial regional cities like Geelong, Newcastle and Wollongong, need support for inner-city redevelopment which should revitalise the small business retail street providing work opportunities for both creative services and cultural production.
- Creative migration is occurring between capital cities and regional centres and all levels of government need to maintain their awareness of the importance of career development pathways for their communities as they expand and benefit for this migration.
- Adjust the Australian census data collection to include secondary incomes to identify how creative workers balance lifestyle choices with creative work.

References:

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