

National Cultural Policy Submission

Cultural Development Network

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

This submission is made by Cultural Development Network (CDN).

It links CDN's initiative of setting up the National Local Government Cultural Forum in 2013 (bullet point 7, p13 *Creative Australia*, 2013) and the resulting published and internationally endorsed planning and evaluation frameworks in 2022. The legacy of the 2013 policy is that these frameworks are now in pilot sites across Australia and ready for the next iteration in the 2022 policy.

What needs solving. Our arts sector is very poor at evaluating and understanding the impact or efficacy of its policies. We are bound by a narrow set of measures primarily audience numbers or ticket sales. We propose a better set of measurable outcomes for the Australians who participate in the arts that adds more understanding to the wonder, awe and personal insights that the arts provide. This would also link the arts and culture to the Treasurer's new wellbeing report.

Our submission proposes that this overlooked public policy responsibility is included into the next Creative Australia Policy.

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

The Closing the Gap policy must connect to this new cultural policy to recognise the role of culture and its centrality to First Nations health, economic, social, and governance outcomes.

A Place for Every Story

The rich diversity of cultural expression across all jurisdictions and communities is largely treated as a cottage industry by policy makers. The national cultural sector needs connectivity, consistency and support in understanding and telling its story.

The Centrality of the Artist

Recognise that artists create and present for reasons other than economic development or social change. There is a 'cultural' imperative of creativity, aesthetic enrichment and deep personal insights that drive us as artists. It needs to be recognised and valued.

Strong Institutions

Cultural institutions are key to bringing together the sector through new technology that can create networks that give support to the roots of creativity and emerging cultural activities and artists across the nation.

Reaching the Audience

Audiences include artists, producers and governments. We, as audiences, are not merely a neutral body of receptive participants to be counted. Understanding the outcomes for audiences and what we/they seek and what we/they feel will tell us more than only counting attendance.

Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why. Feel free to respond to any or all that are applicable to you:

First Nations

The Aboriginal organisations that we already work with recognise the centrality of culture for the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Our frameworks are embraced by those communities because it enables them to design the activities to suit the outcomes they choose.

A Place for Every Story

A range of artform organisations, producers and institutions are using CDN's frameworks for greater understanding of cultural social and economic impact, demonstrating that the diversity of arts has value. This can be extended through the new policy and be reportable evidence of the diversity of cultural expression.

The Centrality of the Artist

Artists and producers are leaders in the Australian community in bringing creativity, emotional enrichment and insights to Australian cultural life. This impact of art and artists are now able to be understood and with greater evidence than ever before through the CDN nationally & internationally validated frameworks.

Strong Institutions

CDN's frameworks allow all types of cultural institution to demonstrate their progress and impact on participants and visitors. By providing a consistent and sustainable platform the leading cultural institutions can contribute new knowledge and reasoning to the creativity and wonder that the collections and presentations can evoke.

Reaching the Audience

CDN's frameworks recognises the diversity of 'Audiences' and the range of outcomes that different audiences are seeking. It is the only framework that is validated in an international peer-reviewed journal and engages directly with audiences.

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

CDN proposes a major work of scale that the new policy can initiate over the next three years. By recognising the leading role that Australia has taken in the development of the measurable outcomes of engaging in arts and cultural activities,

the Commonwealth could extend its current pilots site along with the state and territory governments and leading local governments, to build the first digital sector platform that connects all parts of the rich Australian cultural life.