

# National Cultural Policy Submission

**Guy Webster**

Submitting: As an artist

**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**

Access, funding, mobility. These are issues that can be resolved.

## **A Place for Every Story**

The question of where best to tell one's story – in whatever mode one intends to tell it – exposes the pressures and difficulties venues encounter to stage art. These pressures are largely economic but

## **The Centrality of the Artist**

As any artist will tell you, no artist exists alone, no their art. To centre the artist must be to centre the artists around which their practice has formed, been able to be expressed, and been received.

## **Strong Institutions**

What is most important here is to not conflate 'strong' institutions with 'large' institutions, or institutions with the biggest audience or venue capacity. Art is made

and culture created in the independent and small venues peppered throughout a city and work must be done to support them and state at every turn the appeal of integrating them into hybrid venues (bars with upstairs theatres, book stores with stand up on Saturdays)

### **Reaching the Audience**

We must be intentional in making tickets as accessible as possible. I think of London which has countless scaffolds in place to ensure that theatre is accessible to those without the means to pay. Afterpay options, front row lotteries or designated seating is being explored and should be invested in further.

**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**

This country is based on the stories of our First Nations peoples. Every day we walk through and encounter First Nations art and we must normalise and give language to that encounter whenever we can – both within and outside of venues dedicated to showcasing them.

### **A Place for Every Story**

Diversity must include seen and unseen aspects of minoritisation – it must be holistic and active.

### **The Centrality of the Artist**

This is important yes, but it must be considered in relation to the centrality of critics, audiences and venue managers etc. No artistic is an island.

## **Strong Institutions**

I think of our educational institutions and the need to normalise discussions of Australia's complex but gorgeous cultural history as early as possible, and as often. In this, we can also diversify modes of engagement.

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

I would like to see an acknowledgement of the educational (and more generally, wider) benefits of arts engagement that pairs its ethical, cultural and economic benefits with a less didactic investment in its contribution to understanding self, others and the world. I would also like to see elements of form (mode of art practice) mentioned – that our cultural policy must invest in telling new stories from new perspectives and, additionally, invest in innovating the ways in which those stories can and should be told. Culture is exploratory, it is free-wheeling and nebulous and outside of any system of value we try and subsume it into. All the more testament to its value!