

# National Cultural Policy Submission

**Submitted: On behalf of a for-profit arts business**

**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**

At GML Heritage we completely agree with this goal as a fundamental pillar of Australian culture. We First Nations see history and heritage as integral to culture wholistically, not just arts practice. We acknowledge the rights and interests of First Nations people and believe they are the rightful owners of their culture.

We believe that acknowledgement, better recognition, and protection of First Nations cultural heritage will contribute to improved health and wellbeing, as well as healing and the journey to reconciliation. The destruction of the irreplaceable ancient caves by Rio Tinto at Juukan Gorge is a case in point, where Traditional owners were left bereft by the cultural harm.

We feel that an honest reckoning with our history, confronting the difficult truths, will help strengthen Australia's unique cultural identity and contribute to inclusion and greater civic empathic. This will take strength and courage but ultimately work towards improved awareness and appreciation.

Like most things, this pillar comes with challenges and opportunities. Respectful engagement with is crucial, as is support for community-based research to build the archive of knowledge and information about our history and heritage, various aspects of which have long been silenced or marginalised. A more intricate and sophisticated concept of culture is an opportunity. Just defining the 'culture' as an abstract noun through artistic activity is no longer sufficient to stimulate our symbolic and material systems of production, recognition and representation.

## **A Place for Every Story**

We support this pillar and see Australia's continuous living history and heritage as a key ingredient of culture and identity. Country, landscape, and places are deeply storied through human occupation and experience from deep time to the present. Nature has its own agency and this needs to be integral to placing stories. Stories are diverse and the perspectives on places can enhance our appreciation and understanding of human experience through time. History and heritage can provide instructive insights into how people

## **The Centrality of the Artist**

No question, artists are integral to cultural life and policy. Yet we also see the opportunity in policy to expand this to include other 'makers', creators and story tellers who could and should play a role in shaping our cultural expressions and stories. The 'centrality' of history and heritage could also play a special role in creating and shaping our culture and identity.

## **Strong Institutions**

### **Reaching the Audience**

Audiences are increasingly diverse.

Notwithstanding COVID, people travel, or access experiences and content virtually. This amplifies the audience and creates a range of opportunities and challenges locally and globally. Just as we have seen with online streaming services the demand for quality audience driven content is strong.

Australia has a unique and special stories to present to the world and a well-developed strategy for how we might not only first 'reach' the audience but more importantly engage and connect with them is vital.

There is a great opportunity to explore and expand Australia's cultural policy to provide improved programs or initiatives for creation and engagement to 'reach the audience'.

**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:**

As above

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

As above we would advocate for history and heritage to be considered as integral to cultural expression and life. It is vital to health and wellbeing, and to developing more sophisticated understandings and representations of Australian cultural life and identity.