

National Cultural Policy Submission

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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

Challenges and opportunities exist in creating opportunities to (1) empower First Nations peoples in Caring for Country and the traditional cultural practices associated with this and the use of new, accessible technologies to document associated experiences; (2) empowering First Nations peoples to assist in sharing culture and Country (and creative expression associated with culture and Country) as they deem appropriate.

Note: While I don't identify as a First Nations individual I work closely with First Nations individuals and organisations to assist in creating opportunities and managing opportunities for cultural and creative development, conservation and sharing.

A Place for Every Story

Challenges and opportunities exist in creating opportunities to work with community in embedding stories (and First Nations Story) in public infrastructure development (walls, seating, pathways, etc.) to celebrate difference in the spirit of true, authentic connection. To also celebrate intimate, surprising discoveries (even cultural and creative treasure hunts) and not just 'the spectacular' large sculpture or light show.

The Centrality of the Artist

Opportunities exist in offering professional artists an ongoing 'base income' rather than relying wholly on the stressful inconsistency of income from short-term projects and exhibitions, to create a sector which does not suffer as much from mental health issues and basic living standard insecurity.

Public artists and place activation practitioners should be brought into construction projects at the very inception to work more intimately with the project team and should be paid a professional consultancy fee from inception. Government representatives (federal, state and local) working in public are require training in public art management with a full understanding of time and budget requirements for a successful outcome, as artists/public art managers in this sphere are dramatically underpaid and time pressured. Their payments are often made by the government in an untimely manner, placing a tremendous financial pressure on the artist/public art manager – not just for their own living expenses but the sub-contracting fees and materials paid for by that person to keep the project on track to meet agreed-to project timeframes.

Opportunities exist to encourage the use of upcycled and environmentally friendly materials to be part of the solution to climate change. Partnerships between artists and First Nations knowledge holders should be actively fostered to enhance our caring for country practices as a community.

Reaching the Audience

The public (i.e. arts audiences) are 'survey fatigued'. There is an opportunity to contract artists to develop relevant, creative activities and embed these in digital surveys and face-to-face feedback gathering practices. This will inspire the public to give their feedback through a more attractive, creatively engaging experience. The data will be more valuable from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. From this data, methods developed to reaching the audience will deliver greater success.

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 oldest culture in human history resides in our own country. This is a great privilege and demands conservation and respect. This culture also happens to offer methods of living that may save our planet. Supporting cultural and creative projects that build bridges between audiences and this culture is absolutely paramount.

A Place for Every Story

The more we hear different stories the more compassion and empathy develops. A compassionate and empathetic community is a healthy one. A community without compassion and empathy creates isolation and loneliness; increases bullying behaviour in schools, workplaces and in the home; increases the use of drugs and incidents of domestic violence; reduces the quality of our health and even inspires crime. The promotion of different voices/stories in an engaging manner are vital for healthy communities.

The Centrality of the Artist

How many times have we tried to imagine our lives without the work of artists? No music, no films or television shows, no engaging visual imagery or novels or animations. Not only do professional artists (masters of their practice) bring us pleasure and insight, they help to connect us to each other.

Strong Institutions

While supporting arts institutions is incredibly important, focus is still very much on capital cities and more funding is required for regional areas. Co-support for 'satellite' activities that are conducted out of the institutional space and in community (and even business – as business is part of community) is also important.

Reaching the Audience

What is the purpose of the arts if not to reach and transform others through their practice – i.e. an audience? Therefore, the capacity to reach and also create audiences (i.e. convert non-arts participants/viewers/listeners/supporters into arts audiences) is akin to giving oxygen to the arts sector.

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

More assistance with connecting business to the arts. Not just the large institutions and large companies but SMEs and smaller arts entities/individuals.