

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Submitted: 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

I am a First Nations artist and work in schools teaching art and culture and I have had to teach basic art skills to year 5/6 students because they don't do art in school any more, I have been told that each class has to do an "Art" subject/ component each year but it is open to interpretation and is a minimal requirement so most teachers will do music or dance as visual arts is messy and time consuming not to mention expensive as art and craft materials are taken out of the teachers class budget, so I also have to supply paints and brushes to run my workshops. Visual arts is underfunded/ resourced and valued in primary schools today and I think it should be put back into the curriculum. My other frustration with schools is that they want First Nations artists to teach pre-colonisation art and it often feels tokenistic as teachers only teach children about how Aboriginal people lived and not how they live today, we are portrayed living in a time warp and when I am in schools I am expected to do the same. I also get this attitude from galleries and other NGOs whose focus is on Aboriginal artists/people living on remote communities as they are Australia's' real Aboriginal people. Urban Aboriginal artists are often over looked and feel disenfranchised especially those who do not do traditional art i.e. dot painting/raak/ x-ray and painting on canvas preferably in ochre colours. A lot of young urban Aboriginal artists are photographers, digital imagers etc. which is over-looked by curators, we need more opportunities for modern urban Aboriginal artists including our own galleries and curators who value our developing and evolving arts practices. There also needs to be more education of the wider public as to what is Aboriginal art and craft.