

# National Cultural Policy Consultation

Submission from the South Australian Government

August 2022



# National Cultural Policy

## South Australian Government Submission

### Part 1 – Introduction

#### Overview

The South Australian Government welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the development of the National Cultural Policy (NCP).

A shared national ambition and holistic approach is essential to support the Australian arts and culture sectors to grow, thrive, and reach their full potential, especially following the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on many creative sectors.

Arts and culture have direct relevance across multiple portfolios, at a State and Federal level, including: Trade, Foreign Affairs, Tourism, Small Business, Planning, Health, Communications, Regional Development and Education, as well as impacts across broader areas of the economy through their supply and value chains.

A NCP will appropriately recognise and elevate the arts and the impact that art has on society, and the benefit it brings when considered across all aspects of the Australian economy through integration into key national policies. An overarching framework that sits above all levels of government would drive a coordinated approach, provide opportunities to share best practice, and support enhanced collaboration. It should support individual jurisdictions in their own policy delivery objectives.

#### How do we define Arts and Culture?

We note the statement in the 2013 Creative Australia policy that ‘Culture is more than the arts, but the arts play a unique and central role in its development and expression’ and include individuals, enterprises and organisations engaged in the creation, distribution and collection of arts, entertainment and cultural heritage when referring to the arts and culture sector.

We also commend the recent comments of the Minister for the Arts that it is his intention that, as a cultural policy, the NCP is broader than an arts policy, and will intersect and engage across all levels of government and portfolios, as well as with the non-government and commercial sectors.

#### Principles for a truly National Cultural Policy

It is the South Australian Government’s view that the NCP should be underpinned by a set of understandings between government stakeholders including:

- Commitment to equitable access to Australian government funding and support for the arts and culture sectors wherever they are located.
- Recognition of the unique ecologies of the arts and culture sectors in each jurisdiction and the environments in which our artists and creatives work. This should include identifying and enhancing the signature strengths and areas of national leadership in each jurisdiction (such as theatre for young people in South Australia).
- Recognition of the public value of the arts and culture sectors, underpinned by comprehensive, evidence-based research, which can drive legislative and policy responses, and funding commitments, and a commitment to advocate this value this across government and the broader community.
- Commitment to a collaborative, partnership approach to funding for arts and culture between all jurisdictions, rather than one that is driven solely by Australian Government priorities, whether it be through bipartisan arrangements or national frameworks.

## Why a National Cultural Policy in 2023

The decade since the Creative Australia National Cultural Policy was developed has been a period of enormous change and disruption for Australia and the world. The arts and culture sector has been at the forefront of both driving these changes and being impacted by them.

We believe it is essential that the NCP demonstrates an understanding of the current environment and includes contemporary responses to the challenges and opportunities of today, particularly those outlined below.

### *Digital environment*

Creativity has been transformed through significant digital change over the last decade. This has led to new art forms, creative processes and methods of presentation and documentation.

Digital presentation and distribution has increased access in recent years, particularly during the pandemic, but issues relating to the digital divide, digital literacy and cultural literacy – whether due to age, distance, or socio-economic factors - continue to be a participation barrier for many Australians, as well as to many artists' ability to make and share work.

The convergence of the physical and digital worlds in the metaverse provides significant opportunities for artists across many disciplines to monetise their content. The NCP needs to address the role played by Government in supporting capacity development for artists to accelerate their ability to access these growing markets and to grow audiences for all forms of digital practice and distribution.

This could include investment in building connections with the CreaTech sector (which describes the convergence of creativity and technology). It must also ensure that Australian content continues to be made, distributed, and is discoverable on digital platforms (including global streaming services), and that mechanisms are in place to ensure artists are paid for their work.

At the same time, the policy should recognise the impact of digital creation and presentation on the live arts – especially music – and that their development should complement rather than compete with one another.

## *Impacts of COVID*

After more than two years, the impacts of COVID-19 on the arts and culture sector are continually changing, and are now more challenging for governments to respond to.

The arts and live music sectors were some of the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions that were necessary to ensure South Australians stayed safe.

The COVID pandemic had a disproportionate impact on artists and arts workers and exposed their vulnerability to a volatile economic environment due to the precarious, freelance nature of their work – whether they must rely on short term employment contracts, apply for contestable grants and funding, raise funds from commercial investors, or invest time and materials in making work for later sale.

Previously, policy responses such as the business disruption cover accessed by our statutory authorities and the funding packages provided to arts and cultural organisations, live music venues, artists and promoters, supported the sector to continue operations, create and present work, and maintain employment.

However, since restrictions have been eased, these sectors have continued to struggle as they attempt to return to 'business as usual' in entirely new conditions. This continues to impact the performing arts, festivals and events and live music especially, which are managing the consequences of high transmission levels, and the costs incurred to cover affected cast and crew due to sudden cancellations, as well as critical shortages of skilled production staff and technicians who have left the sector.

The NCP should include a cross-government strategy, such as an insurance scheme, to provide medium-term support for the sector to manage these pressures, and also investigate longer-term structural issues around the attraction, retention and training of key personnel.

## *Climate crisis and the environment*

The arts have a unique ability to reflect on, raise awareness of, and bring innovative ways of thinking to, global challenges such as climate change. Artists are at the forefront of climate activism, capturing and expressing the urgency of the issues, and working with science to design creative solutions.

Over the past decade, artists and producers have become convinced that current arts practice, including performing arts touring and major, international festivals and events, is increasingly unsustainable and are developing strategies to address this by finding ways to share culture without compromising the planet.

Sectors within the creative industries have an important role to play in the circular economy. Enabling these sectors to access relevant Australian Government manufacturing programs could have broad benefits to Australia's sustainability agenda. Elsewhere, developing sustainable design IP is a priority. There are opportunities for collaboration between businesses and government to drive skills and new methods to change design, manufacture and build.

The NCP can reflect on the role of governments to support and encourage this continued area of focus across the sector.

### *Intergenerational change*

A new generation of young Australians has grown up since the release of Creative Australia. These include children and teenagers, secondary and tertiary students, arts graduates and trainees, and early to mid-career artists and arts workers. They are a cohort that did not have the opportunity to contribute to the development of Creative Australia and their input now will be crucial.

They are living, learning and working in a very different world from ten years ago. They have been impacted by change all their lives and often have vastly different attitudes to, and experience from that of their older peers and colleagues. As artists and audiences, they are establishing their careers and their consumption patterns at a time impacted by a global pandemic, climate crisis and massive social change, contextualised by constantly changing platforms and tools for digital production and communication.

The NCP should consider what this means for their practice as artists, or their expectations as audiences and participants, and how previous generations and existing institutions are responding to and staying relevant for this cohort.

## **Implementation of a National Cultural Policy**

The South Australian Government hopes that the NCP will be a dynamic document, which will evolve and respond to changes in the arts, heritage and entertainment sectors, Australian society and the global environment. For this to happen it will be important to establish a robust governance, implementation and evaluation framework for delivery, which also allows for ongoing dialogue and consultation between governments, industry and the sector.

We support reinstating regular meetings of cultural ministers, supported by officials, to share ideas, information and examples of best practice, and to progress the implementation of the NCP and other matters of mutual interest.

We also suggest consideration be given to establishment of a collective industry voice that could represent the breadth and diversity of the arts and culture sector and associated industries. A mechanism supported by the Commonwealth Government, states and territories, and industry could encourage increased collaboration and co-ordination, as well as supporting regular targeted research and policy.

We encourage the Australian Government to use the NCP as a vehicle for clear leadership around a range of key challenges and opportunities by applying a national perspective to matters such as:

- building a shared understanding of, and commitment to, the value of arts and culture to strengthen its use as a cross government tool
- regulatory reform to address red tape and unnecessary regulation adversely affecting the sector generally and live music especially (e.g. liquor licensing, planning, noise regulations etc)
- tax policies including rebates, offsets and R&D incentives for the sector to assist creative businesses to grow and thrive and tax incentives to enhance to motivate private giving and philanthropy.

## Research, Evaluation and Measurement

The South Australian Government supports the development of a refreshed, national evaluation framework to enable Australia to better understand the value and impacts of the arts and culture, and support evidence-based policy leadership. This framework should go beyond the purely economic, and include indirect benefits and social impacts, as well as considering the impacts of creative workers across the whole economy. Such a framework should be developed collaboratively between governments and the arts and culture sectors to ensure consistent, standardised evaluation methods.

We believe there is an opportunity to capitalise on the valuable data collection and analysis capacity of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to support further research into the arts and culture, including:

- a consultation related to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) to inform the next and future updates of the classification with a specific focus on the arts and culture
- capturing more than just one professional activity through the Census, to better understand the numbers of artists and creative practitioners in Australia.

We also endorse the Australian Government reviewing the selection criteria for relevant programs (such as those available through the Australian Research Council) to ensure that the arts and culture receive a fair, proportionate share of Federal research funds.

Further insights to support evidence-based policies could be achieved through a Productivity Commission inquiry, for example into the creative economy value chain.

# Part 2 - National Cultural Policy Consultation Questions – Five Pillars

## First Nations: recognising and respecting the crucial place of these stories at the centre of our arts and culture.

The South Australian Government shares the Federal Government's commitment to positioning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture at the centre of the NCP. The Aboriginal Arts and Culture Strategy for South Australia, released in February 2022, offers significant opportunities to achieve long term, sustainable change and positive impact and to align and build from the NCP. Further information about this can be found at <https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/responsibilities/arts-and-culture/aboriginal-arts-and-cultures>.

South Australia recognises the important role played by the visual arts and crafts market in underpinning cultural identity, creative expression and economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge the recent work of the Productivity Commission on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts and crafts markets. We support proposals to address issues such as the cultural and economic damage caused by inauthentic product and misappropriation of cultural rights and assets, and unethical practices in the market, including:

- regulatory and legislative strategies, including mandatory labelling and protection of Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property
- increased resourcing of the Indigenous Arts Code
- development of individual and organisational capacity.

We also encourage the Australian Government to increase its support for this sector through the NCP by:

- securing substantial, ongoing investment in art centres through the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) program towards increased jobs, infrastructure upgrades, promotional programs with art fairs, and increased market access, and also recognising their important role as community hubs
- providing additional funding and resources for peak bodies across Australia (e.g. Desart, ANKA, Ku Arts) that would enable them to provide consistent approaches, and adequate support to artists and art centres to complement this activity.
- support establishment of a dedicated national First Nations industry development program for contemporary musicians.

Tarrkarri (pronounced tar-ka-ri) Centre for First Nations Cultures, currently under construction in Adelaide, will be one of several related cultural infrastructure projects to come to fruition over the coming decade. A strong NCP will recognise, support and leverage the new perspectives, connections and cultural and economic opportunities that this suite of developments will present for First Nations and other Australian communities and to the world.

## **A place for every story: reflecting the diversity of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.**

The South Australian Government recognises that Australian arts and culture is defined by our culturally and socially diverse communities and their unique relationships with the landscape and environment. It is essential that this sense of place and identity underpins a NCP that includes scope for local and global stories.

### *Place*

A sense of place recognises that Australian culture is made up of the unique stories of each place in the country, and recognises the value of the local, the small-scale and the bespoke within the national and large scale. In this context, South Australia continues to seek opportunities to share our content with wider, national audiences and recognition that our stories have national significance.

A significant amount of Federal Government funding is invested in national collecting institutions and performing arts companies. All Australians should therefore benefit equitably from this investment, by experiencing touring exhibitions and performances, and by seeing their stories represented (through curation and commissioning) in these collections and the work of these companies. This is especially relevant in small states like South Australia that can be overlooked in representations of national identity (e.g. major exhibitions) and missed as a destination on national tours.

The NCP should also address the need for our cities, towns and smaller regional communities to include places and spaces where arts and culture can happen. Governments at all levels should be engaged in the creation and preservation of our valuable cultural heritage assets, and cultural and creative precincts, through direct investment as well as urban development and planning legislation.

Spaces for public art, live performance and other cultural pursuits should be incorporated into new developments. Legislative reform to prevent further losses of our valuable cultural infrastructure (e.g. music venues) due to red tape, unnecessary regulation and other vested interests (e.g. residential development) should be considered.

### *Diversity*

The South Australian government supports a NCP that recognises, amplifies and enables increasingly diverse stories and voices through creativity while continuing to honour heritage artforms and traditional understandings of culture.

We understand the dynamism and innovation that comes from intercultural artistic practice is key to increasing access to the arts by all Australians, to growing new audiences and to maintaining relevance to our community.

In addition to welcoming a policy approach to increase accessibility by diverse audiences to all artforms, we would welcome a focus in the NCP on mechanisms to increase diversity across arts sector governance.



## *Supporting Australian Content*

In an era when Australians are spending more on entertainment, media and internet streaming services than ever before we continue to risk cultural homogeneity if we don't ensure local artists can be seen and heard. Governments play an important role in providing pathways, funding, and regulatory support to ensure Australian content continues to be made, distributed, and is discoverable within global streaming services.

The South Australian Government believes that continued and increased investment in publicly funded broadcasters such as the ABC, SBS and NITV, as well as the screen sector, will be essential to ensure that our unique stories continue to be told and shown to the world.

We encourage regulation to deliver more Australian stories on Australian screens and propose a content investment obligation for streaming platform services set at 20 percent of the service's total Australian gross revenue.

## **The centrality of the artist: supporting the artist as worker and celebrating their role as the creators of culture.**

Professional artists are of critical importance to the creation of culture, and appropriate recognition and support is essential for its future.

Appropriate levels of Government investment in arts funding agencies such as the Australia Council and Screen Australia will be essential to achieve the ambitions of the NCP. This should include:

- investment in fellowships, bursaries and longer-term funding arrangements that will secure basic incomes for artists.
- support for experimentation and risk, and the exploration of new ideas, artforms and technologies.

The NCP should also include measures to ensure that artists are recognised as professional workers by the wider community and appropriately recompensed. The South Australian Government would be keen to work with the Australian Government and other jurisdictions to develop nationally effective approaches on matters such as consistent and enforceable artists' fees, employment arrangements and workplace conditions (e.g. portable leave entitlements). We note however, that the introduction of such mechanisms should not be allowed to erode the value of arts funding, particularly in smaller jurisdictions like South Australia.

Like all other industries, the arts and culture sector requires a broadly skilled workforce. These skills are not only based in artistic practice, but in all the technical and operational facets of producing and presenting arts and events. The exodus of the skilled workers in technical production during the pandemic is resulting in yet more cancellations of performances, festivals and concerts.

An urgent national, multi-levelled response through the NCP should include access to immediate skills development and training pathways, as well as a long-term strategy to attract, develop and retain this workforce.

Further, arts and culture should be recognised for its significant economic contribution and be supported to develop further. The addition of the creative industries to the Commonwealth's Department of Industry, Science and Resources' list of industry growth sectors would have exponential benefits.

## **Strong institutions: providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts and culture.**

Governments at all levels have a crucial role to play in supporting the cultural infrastructure that underpins the making, presentation and collecting of art, and support for artists. This includes the institutions, organisations and programs that facilitate the work of our artists and the preservation and sharing of our stories. This includes support not just for 'bricks and mortar' but for all aspects of their operations, including: governance, resourcing, people, collections, programming and audience outreach.

Over the past decade, cuts to the Federal Government's policy and funding agencies – the Australia Council and Screen Australia – and to the national broadcasters, have had negative impacts on cultural infrastructure across the country. One example in this state has been the impact on the small-to-medium arts sector of reductions in the Australia Council's Four-year Funding program. We support proposals to increase the budget allocations to these agencies to restore lost capacity.

We strongly endorse the continuation of joint funding arrangements for key arts and cultural infrastructure, such as the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework and the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, as well as for strategic projects and initiatives. However, a collaborative approach, and consideration of diverse needs and environmental factors in each jurisdiction, is critical to their success.

Our cultural infrastructure is also sustained by private sector support, including corporate sponsorship and philanthropy. Increasing its capacity to access non-government investment is critical to the arts and culture sector's long-term sustainability and growth. South Australia faces specific challenges in this area because we are not home to many corporate headquarters or major philanthropists. The NCP should ensure that Creative Partnerships Australia maintains its direct engagement and bespoke approach in each jurisdiction following its transfer to the Australia Council.

## **Reaching the audience: ensuring our stories reach the right people at home and abroad.**

### *Cultural diplomacy*

South Australia believes that the NCP should include recognition of the central role of cultural diplomacy in promoting Australia internationally and developing the understanding and people-to-people connections that underpin trade and international relations.

We endorse the continuation of support for arts touring and cultural exchange in Australia's international engagement policies and strategies through:

- Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grants Program
- active participation in international cultural networks and organisations (such as UNESCO)
- promoting our artistic and cultural assets to an international audience
- supporting international cultural collaborations.

### *Trade and export*

We also recommend that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Austrade) consider developing specific export programs to support the arts and creative industries in recognition of the key strengths of arts and culture as a support for its other trade and investment endeavors. This could include an Australian Export Council (or similar) for the Arts and Creative industries, led by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in partnership with industry, as recommended by APRA AMCOS. This Council could:

- support exports of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks and ensure fair remuneration for its creators
- provide research and data on the export landscape. Countries including the United Kingdom, Sweden, and South Korea each currently produce these annual reports.

Additionally, we strongly support an ongoing commitment and increased investment into Sounds Australia.

### *Arts and cultural tourism*

The South Australia Government is committed to developing its arts and cultural tourism sector and offerings as a key platform of post pandemic domestic and international tourism and our visitor economy. This commitment is captured in the South Australian Arts and Cultural Tourism Strategy 2025, released in November 2021. We support a national approach to this as an outcome of the NCP.

### *Education for cultural literacy*

The education sector continues to have a role in identifying and advancing opportunities for the arts and culture sector, including strengthening advocacy, growing cultural literacy, attracting philanthropic and corporate support, development of audiences and addressing skills shortages.

National curricula in the early years and schooling already provide exposure to arts and culture for all learners, as well as opportunities to incorporate the arts in system reform agendas. This includes working with philanthropic and corporate sectors.

The delivery of an NCP could complement the implementation of reforms in national curricula to reaffirm the importance of arts and culture alongside other educational goals for young Australians.