

# National Cultural Policy Submission

Anonymous

Submitted: As an individual

Working as a curator, writer and arts professional in the arts sector for the past 18 years, being a migrant and a woman, I have made some observations which I think are crucial to be addressed by the National Cultural Policy process.

1. Investment, both monetary and cultural, in education in the arts, from music to drama, visual art and literature needs an urgent boost as Australian identity is at stake. Australia's 'provincialism problem' has never resolved itself, and lack of funding for the arts and the humanities over the last 15 years has meant that schools, universities and other institutions which should have been focused on the production of our culture have either been focused on ticking boxes, making money or surviving, but not contributing. General public see this, feel it but more problematically this leaves a cultural gap which can lead us into dire straits: if we don't look after culture, critical thinking and continue to champion what is valuable to us, history has taught us, it can be take away from us before we realise it is too late. We can spend money on defence, carparks and infrastructure AND on culture.
2. Prioritising, at the federal level, culture over 'entertainment', 'sport' and highbrow arts silos. All three are part of culture and should be treated as such. Changing the language and the way we talk about culture, culture creation and the importance of culture in our daily lives, not just jobs and ticket sales and numbers, will make it easier to understand what it is and why it is important. Some galleries get more visitors than stadia they compete with and yet, sports get money easier because it's easy to understand. Perhaps a marketing campaign needs to be had at the federal level for Culture.
3. Strong institutions mean ones with integrity. Currently we have major state and national institutions which don't hold much authority or integrity. Prioritising major institutions and infrastructure seems to be a measure of government support but it has been precisely the lack of support for staff capacity and resourcing to deliver interesting, new and culturally challenging and meaningful programs that has had the biggest impact on the authority and integrity of institutions. Their support structures and KPIs need to change. Their leadership needs to change.

4. Leadership: less white, privileged men at the leadership roles. Culturally in organisations they are the least able or willing to change at a time when we need to be collaborative, open, agile and nimble.
5. Diversity: means cultural change, not box-ticking. It means getting people who haven't been listened to to be heard, allowed to lead and show by example.
6. Safety and care. We all talk about it. But the sector works itself to the bone because funding is not consistent. Along healthcare, arts sector is the worst at demanding the things we need to look after ourselves and each other. This is not a hobby, it's a career at the service of the public good. Guidelines for the sector Code of Practice, Code of Conduct, HR processes for the whole sector that includes people who work at institutions and whose professional standing needs to be protected despite an internal HR process. We look after so many and no one looks after us.
7. Get rid of notions of philanthropic support as a means of sustainability. That is an American model which is deeply flawed and does not suit the basic principles of this country. The work and money that goes into servicing the rich donors could be spent delivering great programs. The money that gets given is never enough and it shouldn't be their responsibility. It is seen as a loophole for the rich but all we need is for them to pay taxes and that money can be channelled to the arts and other sectors that need it. Make it simple.

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

Sector-wide nationally visible Digital Platform for sharing work and projects to widen audiences.