



Indigenous Insights – National Cultural Policy Submission

Submission to the National Cultural Policy – Revive

My name is Aunty Sharron. I am a First Nations artist and cultural educator working through music, language, and storytelling with children, families, and community. Together with my daughters, we teach songs, language, and stories that carry our values of kindness, respect, and caring for Country, animals, and each other. This work is not just creative practice—it is cultural responsibility.

What matters most to me is passing on our knowledge to the next generation in ways that are strong, living, and connected to family and community. When children learn language and culture early, they grow up with identity, pride, and respect for the world around them.

However, there are ongoing challenges that make this work difficult to sustain.

First, there is a lack of long-term, secure funding for First Nations-led cultural education, especially for work with young children and families. Much of our work is supported through short-term projects, which makes it hard to build continuity and trust in community.

Second, cultural knowledge holders are not always recognised as educators. The work we do—teaching language, song, and cultural values—is essential to Australia’s cultural future, yet it is often undervalued or unsupported within formal systems.

Third, without proper support, there is a real risk that language and cultural knowledge will be lost. Our work is about keeping culture strong and alive, but it needs sustained investment.

To respond to these challenges, I recommend:

- **Invest in long-term, community-led funding models** that support First Nations artists and educators to deliver ongoing cultural programs for children and families.
- **Recognise and support cultural knowledge holders as educators**, including pathways that value cultural authority alongside formal qualifications.
- **Embed First Nations language, music, and storytelling in early childhood and community settings**, led by community and Elders.
- **Support intergenerational learning**, where families learn together, strengthening culture in everyday life.

These recommendations align strongly with the Revive pillars, particularly *First Nations First*, by placing our voices, leadership, and cultural authority at the centre, and *A Place for Every Story*, by ensuring our languages and stories are shared and sustained.

I would like to see a National Cultural Policy that recognises that culture begins with our children. Investing in First Nations cultural education is not only about the arts—it is about identity, wellbeing, and the future of this country.

Our work is about raising the next generation to care—for themselves, for each other, and for Country. With the right support, this can continue to grow and strengthen for many years to come.

Sharron mirii Bell



Date: 13/04/2026