

National Cultural Policy Submission

1467750

Public

Organisation

[REDACTED]

CX2Art

[REDACTED]

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am an Australia-based practising artist and gallery owner representing emerging female artists. I support targeted measures where disadvantage is evidenced, but current funding settings are narrowing pathways and weakening the cultural ecosystem. My comments focus on fairness, workable access and international visibility.

The sector faces rising costs, insecure income, limited exhibition pathways and short application windows. Many artists work multiple jobs just to sustain a practice, leaving little time for cultural leadership or sustained bodies of work. Fine art support is patchy and often short-term. Regional partnerships, digital distribution and cultural tourism have potential—if funding is practical to access.

A key concern is the growth of identity-restricted settings in publicly funded opportunities and the apparent prioritisation of one cohort across some competitions, grants and commissions. This is reverse discrimination: it reduces pathways for all artists to build audiences, careers and sales. Over time, repeated prioritisation of Indigenous art in flagship opportunities has sidelined other local artists and narrowed the platform. Diversity is not achieved by elevating one category while shrinking options for others.

This is not an argument against targeted programs with a clear rationale. It is a call for balance and transparency: broad-based streams must be substantial, open to all Australian artists, and assessed against published criteria. Where exclusive programs exist, government should publish the rationale and outcomes and ensure they do not crowd out the wider sector.

To make funding workable, applications need adequate notice and proportionate administration. Short deadlines and complex requirements favour organisations with grant staff and disadvantage independent artists and small galleries. Small shows for emerging artists run on modest budgets, yet many schemes implicitly reward large marketing spend. Set minimum application windows (6–8 weeks), simplify guidelines, provide sample budgets and feedback, and publish predictable calendars.

The policy should strengthen international showcasing. Travel, freight, insurance and visas make overseas opportunities unrealistic without assistance. Increase export support (touring, fairs/biennales, and partnerships with diplomatic posts) with clear selection and practical help for first-time presenters.

Information for small operators should be simple: one plain-language guide to grants, sponsorship and business support, with basic templates.

Policy priorities:

- Open, merit-based and transparent funding/competitions that expand pathways across the whole sector (not identity-based exclusions). Targeted supports should be evidence-based and not reduce fair access for others.

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- Workable local funding: longer windows, simpler processes, predictable rounds and useful feedback—designed for small galleries and small shows, not only large organisations with big marketing budgets.
- Increased investment in international showcasing so artists can build global audiences and sustainable careers.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. A whole-of-sector approach is needed to grow pathways for all artists, restore confidence in funding decisions, and lift Australian culture internationally.

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