

National Cultural Policy Submission

1467874

Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As [REDACTED] Theatre in Queenstown, Tasmania, since 2017 we have worked hard to transform it into a multi-purpose live performance and events venue, guided by a belief that regional communities should have access to varied cultural experiences and actively participate in their creation and presentation.

Key challenges for us are remoteness and a small population base. The Live Music Australia grants program funding has been vital, enabling us to install professional sound and lighting, attract touring acts, support emerging artists without access to equipment, and stage concerts where we can fairly pay musicians for their performances.

Without this support, it would have taken many more years—if it were possible at all—to reach the level of technical professional capacity we envisaged. This highlights a key opportunity for national cultural policy: targeted investment can directly address structural disadvantage and unlock cultural participation in regional Australia.

A core part of our philosophy is creating pathways for emerging artists. At [REDACTED] Theatre, our regular open mic sessions provide a safe and inclusive entry point for local musicians and performers. For many, this is their first performance on a professional stage, with proper sound, lighting and technical support and a live audience.

This transition from informal creativity to public performance is often transformative. It builds confidence, develops skills, and provides insight into professional expectations. We have seen participants grow into confident local acts, support touring artists, and in some cases begin performing beyond the region. In communities like Queenstown, where formal arts education and industry pathways are very limited, these grassroots opportunities are essential.

Visual arts and creative organisations have also played a significant role in Queenstown's cultural renewal. The Unconformity and galleries such as Soggy Broly, Empire Art Box, Q Bank and organisations including LARQ and PressWest, have brought new creatives and audiences to our region. These organisations have broadened participation, attracted new demographics, and contributed to both cultural and economic diversification.

In parallel, my 15 years as a board member (recently resigned) of [REDACTED] has reinforced the role of culture in community resilience. Following the closure of the Mt Lyell Mine in 2014, Queenstown's population fell from over 3,000 to around 1,600. In that context, cultural activity has been central to maintaining identity, cohesion, and optimism about the future as well as population growth.

What matters most to me is ensuring culture is accessible, participatory, and sustained across all levels. The national cultural policy should recognise culture as essential regional infrastructure. It should support layered ecosystems: major festivals that bring national attention, independent organisations that build continuity, and grassroots venues that enable everyday participation.

When these elements are supported together, culture becomes not just an industry, but a foundation for resilient and connected communities.