

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am a proud Yuin descendant and have spent over 30 years working across education and the cultural sector.

First Nations cultures are not a starting point for Australia's cultural story. They are its foundation. Any national cultural policy worth its name must reflect that, not just in language but in the resources, structures and commitments behind it.

There are four things I need the next policy to get right.

Self-determination is not symbolic.

First Nations people must hold real authority over how their cultures are represented, shared and protected

Decision-making cannot sit with non-Indigenous leadership while First Nations knowledge and relationships do the heavy lifting

Every institution receiving public funding should be required to demonstrate genuine First Nations governance

Secure jobs, not endless contracts.

Skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are cycling through contract after contract, unable to get a mortgage or plan for their future

This is a structural inequity that pushes First Nations people out of institutions that need them most

The next policy needs an employment strategy that prioritises ongoing, secure positions and genuine career pathways

Real action on racism.

Racism in the workplace is not addressed by a 20-minute online module

Institutions must demonstrate meaningful, ongoing anti-racism action including culturally informed training led by First Nations people

There must be clear complaint processes and accountability for leaders when racist behaviour goes unchallenged

Watching a video is not a strategy. Structural change is.

Care for what was taken.

Our institutions hold First Nations objects, cultural material and ancestral remains acquired (stolen) across centuries of colonisation (invasion)

Caring for this material and returning it to Country requires skilled teams, appropriate facilities and dedicated funding outside competitive grant cycles

Repatriation is an act of healing and justice and should never be stalled by a budget line

Close the policy loop.

Australia is good at writing policies that name First Nations priorities and less good at delivering on them  
First Nations voice and agency must be embedded across the full cycle of implementation, evaluation and accountability

Not consultation at the start and a report at the end. Genuine, resourced, ongoing authority

The people with the knowledge and vision to lead this work are already here. The next policy should trust that, fund it properly and get out of the way.