

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

While income insecurity remains a significant challenge for many artists and creative workers, an equally critical and less discussed issue is the growing lack of affordable, accessible spaces and practical support for creative practice, performance and participation.

Across Australia, industrial zoning is increasingly being converted to residential development. This has resulted in the steady loss of warehouses, studios, rehearsal rooms, galleries and small performance venues; particularly those that are financially accessible to independent creatives. The impact is not only economic, but cultural: fewer spaces mean fewer opportunities to create, collaborate, experiment and reach local audiences.

At the same time, many publicly owned spaces that could act as cultural hubs, such as town halls, community centres and civic buildings, are not adequately equipped or operationally supported for creative use. While these spaces are often architecturally ideal for performances, exhibitions and live music, artists are frequently required to supply all technical infrastructure themselves, including sound, front of house and staging. This significantly increases costs and complexity and can make the use of these spaces unviable, particularly for emerging and independent practitioners.

Commercial venues are also becoming increasingly expensive and risk-averse, often shifting marketing, coordination and financial risk onto creatives. This further entrenches inequality in who can afford to present work, privileging those with existing resources and institutional backing.

Greater investment in affordable, fit-for-purpose creative spaces would make a transformational difference. One opportunity is the adaptive reuse of underutilised public assets, such as vacant railway buildings and other government-owned properties, as creative work and presentation spaces. While successful models exist, such as Carriageworks, it is important to recognise that many of these spaces remain financially inaccessible for the majority of creatives. Scaled, lower-cost models are urgently needed.

Beyond direct funding, the sector would also benefit from non-monetary support programs. These could include initiatives where organisations donate access to physical spaces, accounting or legal services, marketing assistance, equipment, and professional networks. Similar to an “adopt-an-artist” or creative partnership scheme for larger businesses and institutions.

Finally, sustained government investment in creative education and the genuine promotion of local creative activity is essential. This includes supporting visibility for Australian artists, galleries, performances and events through government-backed channels without requiring creatives to pay for marketing or exposure. Reaching audiences should not come at the expense of those creating the work.

A strong national cultural policy must recognise that artists need not only fair pay, but the physical, practical and structural conditions that allow creativity to thrive.