

Submission to the Next National Cultural Policy Consultation

Cultural Futures Framework (CFF) Response

A national framework to circulate and enhance cultural value through sustainable economic pathways

Executive Summary

This submission supports the direction established in Revive and proposes a practical mechanism to strengthen the sustainability of cultural work in Australia.

While cultural activity generates substantial economic and social value, this value is not consistently returned to the creators and communities who produce it.

To address this, the Cultural Futures Framework proposes the establishment of a national investment mechanism — the Cultural Futures Fund — designed to capture and reintegrate cultural value into career pathways, community participation, and cultural infrastructure.

This approach aligns most directly with the centrality of the artist, the need for strong cultural infrastructure, and inclusive participation across the cultural landscape.

Introduction

The release of Revive marked an important step in recognising arts and culture as central to Australia’s national life. The current consultation provides an opportunity to extend this work by strengthening the structural conditions that support cultural practitioners over time.

This submission builds on the existing framework by focusing on how cultural value can be more effectively circulated within the economy. It draws on the Cultural Futures Framework (CFF), which addresses the long-standing imbalance between the value generated through cultural activity and the financial return received by those who create it.

The Cultural Futures Framework understands “futures” not as something abstract or distant, but as the ongoing continuity of cultural value across past, present, and future — grounded in relationships, reciprocity, and shared responsibility.

The intention of this submission is not to replace the current policy direction, but to contribute a practical extension that supports long-term sustainability, participation, and economic integration within the cultural sector.

Pillar 3 — Centrality of the Artist

The recognition of artists as workers is a critical step forward. However, cultural practitioners are not only participants in the labour market; they are generators of value across multiple sectors, including media, education, tourism, technology, and community life.

At present, much of this value is not returned to those who create it. Instead, it is captured indirectly through platforms, institutions, and secondary industries.

A key opportunity for the next National Cultural Policy is to move beyond recognition toward structural inclusion. This involves ensuring that cultural labour is not treated as marginal or

supplementary, but as a core component of the national economy.

The Cultural Futures Framework addresses this through the expansion of rights, including performance and digital contributions, and through mechanisms that enable cultural practitioners to participate fully in the economy they sustain.

The Cultural Futures Fund — A National Cultural Value Mechanism

Cultural activity generates substantial economic and social value across Australia. However, much of this value is extracted through platforms, institutions, and secondary industries without being consistently returned to the creators and communities who produce it.

The Cultural Futures Fund is proposed as a national cultural investment mechanism to address this imbalance. It provides a practical means of capturing, circulating, and sustaining cultural value within the economy.

The Fund operates on a simple principle:

Those who derive economic benefit from cultural content should contribute to the sustainability of the system that produces it.

This includes:

- Digital platforms
- Streaming services
- AI systems
- Cultural venues

By establishing a structured mechanism for contribution and reinvestment, the Cultural Futures Fund transforms a one-way flow of value into a system of circulation.

In this sense, the Fund functions as the structural link between cultural production and economic return. It enables cultural value to move back toward creators and communities, supporting sustainable careers, ongoing participation, and long-term cultural continuity.

Pillar 2 — A Place for Every Story

Inclusion must extend beyond representation to participation, continuity, and viability.

Many individuals and communities possess deep cultural capacity but lack clear pathways into sustained practice or economic participation. This is particularly relevant for regional, remote, and First Nations communities, as well as for individuals whose cultural contributions occur outside formal institutional settings.

The Cultural Futures Framework supports:

- Apprenticeship-based pathways
- Community-embedded cultural work
- Flexible entry points recognising informal practice

This ensures that no contributor is left outside the systems that sustain cultural life.

Closing Reflection

The next National Cultural Policy has an opportunity to move beyond recognising cultural value toward ensuring it circulates fairly and sustainably.

Cultural labour is not peripheral to the economy — it is foundational to it.

This submission is offered as a practical extension to support a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable cultural future.



Appendix A — Cultural Futures Framework (CFF)

The following appendix provides a detailed outline of the Cultural Futures Framework referenced in the above submission.

Cultural Futures Framework (CFF)

A structural model for recognising, circulating, and sustaining cultural value

Core Proposition

Cultural activity is not peripheral to the economy. It is foundational to it.

Across Australia, cultural practitioners generate substantial economic, social, and symbolic value. This value flows through industries including media, technology, tourism, education, and community development. However, the financial return to those who create this value remains inconsistent, fragmented, and often insufficient to sustain long-term participation.

The Cultural Futures Framework (CFF) addresses this structural imbalance.

It proposes that cultural value must not only be recognised, but circulated — returned to the individuals and communities who generate it through practical, sustainable pathways.

Cultural Value as a Living System

The Cultural Futures Framework understands cultural value as part of a continuous system rather than a series of isolated outputs.

“Futures” are not abstract or distant. They represent the ongoing continuity of cultural value across past, present, and future — grounded in relationships, reciprocity, and shared responsibility.

Cultural production is therefore:

- Relational rather than individual
- Continuous rather than episodic
- Generative across multiple domains
- Embedded within community and place

This perspective aligns with longstanding principles of reciprocity, including those present in First Nations knowledge systems, where value is understood as something that must move, return, and be sustained over time.

The Structural Imbalance

At present, cultural value tends to move in one direction:

- Created by individuals and communities

- Captured by platforms, institutions, and markets
- Distributed unevenly or insufficiently back to its source

This results in:

- Underpaid or unpaid cultural labour
- Limited career sustainability
- Barriers to entry and participation
- Loss of cultural continuity in communities

The issue is not a lack of cultural activity. It is a lack of structured return.

The Cultural Futures Response

The Cultural Futures Framework establishes a system in which:

- Cultural value is recognised as economically and socially generative
- Pathways exist for individuals to move from participation to sustained practice
- Financial flows are structured to support long-term engagement
- Communities are able to maintain and develop their cultural capacity

This is achieved through three interconnected components:

1. Expanded Rights Framework

The CFF extends existing copyright systems to better reflect the realities of cultural production.

It includes:

Copyright

Protection of original works and intellectual property

Performing Rights

Compensation for the use and broadcast of creative works

Performance Rights

Recognition of performers as contributors to cultural value, regardless of authorship

Digital and AI Contributions

Recognition that digital platforms and AI systems derive value from cultural content and should contribute to its sustainability

Together, these rights recognise that cultural value is produced collectively and across multiple roles, not solely through authorship.

2. Structured Pathways and Workforce Integration

Cultural participation must be connected to viable pathways.

The CFF proposes:

Paid apprenticeships

Emerging practitioners paired with experienced artists and supported through structured funding streams

Career pathways

Clear routes from entry-level participation to professional sustainability

Public sector engagement

Integration of cultural practitioners into education, community programs, and public initiatives

Workforce protections

Access to superannuation, insurance, and other employment-aligned benefits

These pathways ensure that cultural work is not dependent on sporadic opportunity, but embedded within a functioning economic system.

3. The Cultural Futures Fund

At the centre of the framework is a national investment mechanism:

The Cultural Futures Fund

The Fund operates as a long-term financial engine rather than a traditional grants body.

Its role is to:

- Capture a portion of the value generated through cultural activity
- Redirect that value into sustainable career pathways and community capacity
- Provide continuity of support rather than short-term project funding

Funding Streams

The Cultural Futures Fund draws from multiple sources, reflecting the broad distribution of cultural value:

- Digital and platform contributions
- AI-related contributions
- Venue and exhibition contributions
- Reconfigured public investment

These streams recognise that cultural value is widely distributed across the economy and should be returned accordingly.

Regional, Remote, and First Nations Contexts

The framework is designed to be adaptable across diverse contexts.

It supports:

- Regional and remote cultural economies
- Community-led cultural practice
- First Nations cultural continuity and leadership
- Localised pathways aligned with place-based knowledge and expression

Economic Integration

The Cultural Futures Framework does not seek to create dependency. It seeks to correct imbalance.

By integrating cultural labour into the broader economy, the framework enables:

- Stable income pathways
- Long-term participation
- Intergenerational continuity
- Broader economic contribution

Cultural practitioners are recognised not as peripheral contributors, but as integral participants in national productivity and identity.

Closing Position

Cultural value is already being created at scale.

The challenge is ensuring that it is returned, sustained, and allowed to circulate.

This is not an abstract goal. It is a practical requirement for:

- Economic fairness
- Cultural continuity
- National resilience

The framework provides a structured, implementable approach to achieving this outcome.

Chris Anderson
Cultural Futures Framework

