

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of the new National Cultural Policy. My submission outlines concerns regarding the current policy direction, using an analytical framework, which emphasises examining underlying assumptions, interrogating policy logic, and assessing structural implications. This submission is offered in the spirit of constructive critique to support a more robust and futureproof cultural framework.

### 1. Problem Framing and Policy Continuity

The consultation materials present the new National Cultural Policy as a continuation of Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place, assuming that the previous framework was successful and requires only refinement. However, this framing risks obscuring unresolved systemic issues that have long affected the cultural sector, including inconsistent funding, fragmented governance, and uneven implementation across states and territories. By positioning the new policy as an “update” rather than a structural reconsideration, the Government may inadvertently entrench the same limitations that constrained Revive’s effectiveness.

### 2. Embedded Assumptions in the Five Pillar Structure

The decision to retain the five pillars, First Nations First; A Place for Every Story; Centrality of the Artist; Strong Cultural Infrastructure; Engaging the Audience, assumes that these categories remain the most effective organising principles for cultural policy. A more logical suitable model encourages scrutiny of such assumptions. The pillars, while conceptually appealing, risk oversimplifying the diverse and complex needs of Australia’s cultural ecosystem. They also reflect the political and symbolic priorities of the period in which Revive was developed, rather than a fresh assessment of current sector realities. Reusing them without critical evaluation may limit the policy’s capacity to address emerging challenges.

### 3. Evidence Gaps and Evaluation Transparency

The consultation paper states that the new policy will “address gaps” and “respond to emerging priorities,” yet it does not identify what those gaps are or how they were determined. A rigorous policy process requires transparent evaluation of previous initiatives. Many components of Revive, including governance reforms and First Nations led structures, were announced with ambition but experienced delays or unclear implementation pathways. Without a public assessment of Revive’s outcomes, the new policy risks being aspirational rather than evidence based.

### 4. Structural Risks and Policy Stability

Cultural policy in Australia has historically been vulnerable to political cycles. The personal recommended framework highlights the importance of examining this structural instability. A policy that is closely tied to the agenda of a single government may struggle to deliver longterm benefits if future administrations alter or abandon its direction. This instability undermines planning for artists, organisations, and cultural infrastructure, all of which require multiyear certainty.

### 5. Consequences of Continuing the Existing Framework

If the new policy largely replicates Revive without deeper structural reform, several risks emerge: symbolic rather than substantive change; consultation fatigue; misalignment between policy rhetoric and sector capacity; and overcentralisation that may disadvantage smaller or community led cultural ecosystems.