

Submission to the National Cultural Policy

This submission is provided by a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) visual artist and Filipino migrant woman with 22 years of professional practice in Australia. My work includes 13 solo exhibitions; works held in private collections across 18 countries; and collaborative woven sculptures collected by the National Gallery of Australia and the South Australian Museum. My practice is grounded in cross-cultural collaboration, community partnership and culturally authorised work with Indigenous Elders under ICIP.

1. Key challenges and opportunities across the five pillars

Pillar 1 – First Nations First

My collaborations with Indigenous Elders follow cultural authority and ICIP obligations, supporting knowledge transfer and community-led practice. However, Elders' time and cultural labour are often unfunded. Multi-year investment is needed to sustain culturally authorised work, resource Elders appropriately, and ensure continuity grounded in respect, protocol and community governance.

Pillar 2 – A Place for Every Story

CALD artists contribute through migrant narratives, local materials and hybrid methodologies. Yet cross-cultural practice is often disadvantaged by funding categories, assessment frameworks and narrow definitions of merit. Recognising CALD practice as core cultural infrastructure using criteria that value cultural protocol, innovation and community partnership would strengthen equity, inclusion and representation.

Pillar 3 – Centrality of the Artist

Despite sustained national and international recognition, I have not secured solo government grant support, indicating structural barriers affecting CALD artists. To uphold "centrality of the artist," implementation must include enforceable payment standards, transparent assessment, and remuneration that reflects the true cost of professional practice. Equity measures should address systemic bias and ensure CALD artists access core investment pathways.

Pillar 4 – Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Electoral boundary changes can remove eligibility for CALD artists who have contributed to regions for decades. National Cultural Policy should include equity safeguards, transitional arrangements and review mechanisms so reclassification does not exclude artists from support. Cultural infrastructure must recognise regional mobility, demographic change and long-term community contribution.

Pillar 5 – Engaging the Audience

My work has reached audiences nationally and internationally, yet sustaining engagement without structural support remains challenging. Stronger touring, digital presentation and cross-cultural partnerships would expand access for CALD artists, including those outside metropolitan centres. Investment in digital infrastructure is essential so regional and migrant artists can participate fully in national cultural life.

2. Why the five pillars matter to CALD artists

The pillars highlight the need for cultural authority, fair remuneration, inclusive eligibility settings and stronger national access. For CALD artists, these principles support visibility, equity and long-term sustainability.

3. What the next National Cultural Policy should deliver

- Recognise and measure CALD contribution through datasets, reporting and investment settings.
- Establish dedicated funding pathways for CALD and crosscultural practice.
- Implement enforceable remuneration standards and transparent assessment processes.
- Introduce equity safeguards for eligibility and boundary changes.
- Provide multi-year support for culturally authorised First Nations collaborations.
- Strengthen regional and digital access through touring, production support and digital presentation.

CALD artists deliver sustained public value without reliable support. The next National Cultural Policy must align equity goals with targeted investment, safeguards and enforceable standards.