

## National Cultural Policy Submission

Mikhail Jonas Constantino Acebo



### *New National Cultural Policy: Why Australia Needs Historical & Classical Inspirations for its New Arts & Culture Strategy*

Having read the New National Cultural Policy, I believe that the artistic strategy of our nation reads less like an artistic creed and more like a sterile corporate branding pastiche of superficial and simplistic conceptions of what arts and culture convey. It lacks sustenance from historical and philosophical underpinnings of arts and culture, which is the yearning of every human civilisation - “Truth”, “Beauty” & “Goodness”.

“Truth” means that there are an external reality and a cosmology in which humans understand to be part of. “Beauty” demonstrates aesthetic qualities like proportion, symmetry, shape, colour, sound and form when synthesised together as a cohesive whole appeal to the human senses for appreciation and admiration. “Goodness” dictates an objective and universal set of moral and ethical principles that transcend people’s feelings and society’s beliefs.

“Truth”, “Beauty” and “Goodness” are the “Three Transcendentals” - derived from a unique philosophical and theological syntheses laid out by Aristotle, Plato, Aquinas and Augustine in that all human societies and cultures strive for and depict transcendental values in their lives, artworks and monuments. While these ideals were largely shaped within Europe at the intersection of Greco – Roman Philosophy and Christianity, different cultures and traditions from the Islamic World, Confucian Sinosphere, Hindu & Buddhist Dharmic civilisations and even the Australian First Nations displayed similar transcendent strivings and yearnings depicted in their arts, rituals and languages.

Australia contains a wealth of cultural influences from the First Nations, Europe and Asia – Pacific, yet we are surrounded by artworks, monuments and architecture influenced by modernist, brutalist and minimalist movements. Instead, our new cultural policy for the future must build upon tradition than make a break from it, to take inspiration from artistic themes like Gothic, Baroque, Timurid and Chinese as such then combine it with

Indigenous and Pacific motifs. With contemporary revolutionary technologies and high degree of STEM expertise, Australia can lead the world in creating more beautiful artworks reflecting transcendence through classical education than simply fulfil mere socio-economic imperatives.

We Australians travel to places in Europe and Asia, marveling at centuries – old cathedrals and temples yet implement no such similar aspirations of artistic creations that can last through the ages. We sacrificed transcendence, wonder, and faith at the altars of cost, scale and efficiency. Our buildings and artworks should not look like factories or corporate branding logos, but grand edifices and masterpieces dedicated to Australia's glorious heritages and confident march to the future.

We must do more than just foster token participatory and inclusivity parades but strive for legacy, excellence and immortality in our artistic and cultural fabrics. We disappoint future generations when we impart mediocrity and indulgence instead of achievement and permanence.

Economics teaches us how to live, but it is Arts & Culture that teaches us how to yearn and accomplish.