

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As a Bangladeshi-Australian curator, producer, and broadcaster working across music, screen, and community-led cultural projects, my practice sits between grassroots and institutional spaces. I've worked across major festivals, independent collectives, and youth programs in Western Sydney, and my perspective is shaped by both creating opportunities and navigating the gaps that still exist. The current national cultural policy, Revive, has made important progress, particularly in recognising First Nations leadership, supporting diverse storytelling, and acknowledging artists as workers. These pillars are meaningful. However, the lived reality for many artists, particularly those from culturally diverse and migrant backgrounds, still does not reflect this intent. A key challenge is the ability to generate consistent, sustainable income. Many artists today are inherently multidisciplinary, working across music, screen, digital content, events, and community engagement. However, funding structures and industry systems remain siloed, making it difficult to properly support or monetise this kind of practice. There needs to be more flexibility in how artists are funded and recognised, reflecting the reality of hybrid careers. Accessibility is another major issue. While funding exists, it is often difficult to access in practice. From my own experience, I have encountered barriers due to technicalities or criteria that do not reflect non-linear career paths, community-led work, or culturally specific practices. This results in capable artists being excluded, not due to a lack of merit, but because systems are not designed with them in mind. There is also a need for more year-round access to grants and opportunities, rather than limited application windows that don't align with how creative work develops. At the same time, there is a significant opportunity in Australia's multicultural makeup. In places like Western Sydney, there is a depth of cultural knowledge, creativity, and audience engagement that remains underutilised. This should exist in dialogue with First Nations leadership, creating a cultural ecosystem that is both diverse and grounded. There is real potential for a more cohesive and representative cultural landscape if these communities are meaningfully supported. It is also important to address imbalances in how multicultural funding is distributed. While there has been strong engagement with some regions, such as India, other communities, including Bangladeshi and surrounding diasporas, remain underrepresented despite their growing contribution to Australia's cultural life. A more equitable and nuanced approach is needed. Moving forward, the next National Cultural Policy should prioritise flexible funding models that reflect multidisciplinary practices, improve accessibility by rethinking application criteria, and invest more deeply in underrepresented migrant communities. Supporting grassroots and community-led initiatives alongside major institutions will be key to building a more sustainable and inclusive sector. Ultimately, the policy should reflect the reality of contemporary cultural practice in Australia, one that is diverse, hybrid, and community-driven, and ensure that artists working within these spaces are properly supported.