



## National Cultural Policy Submission

13.12 welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to inform the development of the new National Cultural Policy.

### **About 13.12**

13.12 explores and activates ancient African ways of knowing and being to deepen understanding of ourselves, each other, and the world around us. We bring together communities, artists and academics to advance research and to develop and deliver interdisciplinary arts experiences, programs and tools for a more cohesive, connected, and thriving society.

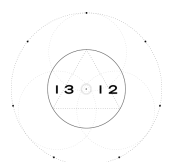
Through our work, we have seen the positive impacts of arts projects and initiatives that centre culturally diverse ways of knowing and doing in both process and outcomes. These impacts include innovative approaches to artistic expression and exchange, alongside strengthened social cohesion across communities, audiences, and cultural contexts, grounded in connection, shared purpose, and collective responsibility.

### **Recommendations**

We recommend the following strategies within the National Cultural Policy to embed equity and meaningful representation, enabling all artists and communities to contribute as leaders and knowledge holders within Australia's cultural landscape.

#### **Community-led and culturally embedded models of practice**

Current funding structures often place decision-making power outside of the communities whose cultural arts practice is being engaged, leading to misalignment, reduced accountability, and the dilution of cultural integrity. We recommend prioritising models that centre cultural authority within communities. Policy frameworks must support approaches where knowledge holders and practitioners lead decision-making, ensuring cultural practices are developed and shared with integrity and accountability.



### Flexible and adaptive frameworks

**2** Current funding frameworks often prioritise simple methods of evaluating and quantifying outputs over the deeper cultural and relational processes that underpin meaningful artistic and community work. This can result in the undervaluing of long-term engagement, trust-building, and the generative conditions through which creative and social impacts emerge. We recommend funding frameworks that place much greater emphasis on process, relationship-building, and non-traditional modes of expression as valid and valuable outcomes. Evaluation frameworks should move beyond narrow output metrics to account more for cultural, social, and relational impact. They should be understood as core indicators, particularly in contexts where cultural transmission, community wellbeing, and intergenerational knowledge are central.

### Long-term, multi-year investment in culturally diverse arts practices

**3** Evidence shows that in recent years, investment for the creation of cultural infrastructure has increased at a faster rate than investment in sustaining the people, practices, and programs that bring creativity and the arts into everyday life. Research also tells us that culturally diverse artists and organisations are under-represented across all areas and all levels of the creative sectors. We recommend a higher level of sustained, multi-year investment for culturally diverse organisations, artists, and community-led initiatives. Long-term investment is essential for capacity building, stability, growth, strategic development and meaningful cultural impact. It will enable artists and organisations to plan beyond immediate deliverables, to refine and evolve over time and to build the institutional and relational foundations necessary for sustained creative excellence.

Investment in culturally diverse artists, communities and knowledge systems strengthens Australia's cultural intelligence and enhances its capacity to respond creatively and cohesively to complex social challenges. By embedding these approaches across all pillars of the National Cultural Policy, Australia can foster a more equitable, resilient, and imaginative cultural ecosystem.

Yours Sincerely,

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Executive Director  
13.12

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Executive Producer  
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