

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469447

Public and anonymous

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am a community engagement practitioner and emerging artist with a background in education, anthropology and environmental science. Working across disciplines has shown me that the arts have a distinctive, underutilised role across many areas of public life. I am currently contributing to Flying Fox Woman, a women's safety and creative placemaking project in Brisbane, and write as both a practitioner and citizen who believes the arts are essential to a healthy, cohesive society.

Pillar 1 — First Nations First

First Nations cultural practice is one of our most powerful vehicles for building shared understanding and advancing reconciliation. Supporting First Nations artists to lead and sustain their own cultural work is a matter of self-determination and an investment in national cohesion. Forthcoming ICIP legislation must include real enforcement as AI systems increasingly risk reproducing First Nations cultural material without consent.

Pillars 2 and 3 — A Place for Every Story / Centrality of the Artist

Flying Fox Woman illustrates what community-led arts practice can achieve. The project uses safety mapping and creative interventions to test how places can be made more vibrant and welcoming — bringing together artists, urban planners and communities in a way that neither arts nor planning funding typically supports alone.

The next National Cultural Policy should reflect the role arts already play across health, urban planning, climate response and education — investing accordingly, rather than treating culture as a standalone portfolio concern. Artists think laterally and work relationally; embedding them within other policy domains strengthens outcomes. This only works if artists are fairly paid. NAVA sector consultations found unpaid labour is endemic, with remuneration standards routinely ignored by publicly funded organisations. Public arts funding should require compliance with the NAVA Code of Practice.

Pillar 4 — Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Australia's cultural and creative sector contributed \$67.4 billion to GDP in 2023–24 (BCARR, 2025). A New Approach found the sector attracted \$160 billion in total income in 2020–21, mostly from sales and services (Fielding et al., 2023). Yet government investment has not kept pace — studios, regional arts spaces and community infrastructure remain chronically underfunded. Tax reform — fairer treatment of grants for artists with irregular incomes and superannuation on all artistic labour — is a practical place to start.

Pillar 5 — Engaging the Audience

Creative placemaking and community-led arts reduce social isolation and build cohesion. The arts don't just make places liveable — they make them loveable. Culture should be treated not as entertainment funding, but as investment in the kind of society Australia wants to be.

References

BCARR. (2025). Cultural and Creative Activity in Australia. <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/research-data/bureau-communications-arts-and-regional-research/arts/cultural-and-creative-activity>

Fielding et al. (2023). To Scale. A New Approach. <https://newapproach.org.au/publication/to-scale-mapping-financial-inflows-in-australian-arts-culture-and-creativity/>

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