

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

Institute of Regenerative Leadership

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Despite its national reach and impact, Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) is not explicitly recognised within the current REVIVE framework. This is a significant policy omission. It renders invisible a cross-sector practice that already delivers on national priorities of equity, access and participation, while limiting Australia's capacity to use creative practice in response to complex challenges including climate impacts, disasters, inequality and social fragmentation. Without CACD, REVIVE risks overlooking one of the primary ways Australians meaningfully engage with arts and culture.

As a CACD practitioner in Western Australia for more than 25 years, I have seen firsthand the transformative role this work plays within communities. Over that time, I have continually evolved my practice in response to increasingly complex social, cultural and environmental challenges, often without the support structures, investment or opportunities for knowledge-sharing needed to sustain the field. At a time of escalating climate impacts, social fragmentation and growing inequality, the lack of coordinated support for CACD practitioners represents a serious gap in Australia's cultural infrastructure.

CACD is not a niche artform. It is a cultural methodology embedded across health, education, justice, disaster management and climate adaptation. Yet despite its reach, only 5–6% of national arts investment is explicitly attributed to CACD. This significantly underrepresents the reality of practice because CACD work is dispersed across sectors and funding streams and is not consistently measured. The result is systemic undervaluation and a disconnect between policy commitments to inclusion and the mechanisms needed to achieve them.

CACD delivers outcomes central to Australia's social and cultural resilience. It strengthens social cohesion and belonging, improves wellbeing, builds local economies and workforce pathways, enhances civic participation, and supports environmental awareness and climate adaptation. Importantly, it provides the relational infrastructure that enables communities not only to respond to disruption, but to actively shape their cultural futures.

CACD also advances all five pillars of REVIVE. It supports First Nations self-determination, ensures diverse stories are visible, recognises community-based artists as essential contributors to cultural life, and shifts engagement from passive audiences to active participation. Its impact is especially significant for First Nations peoples, young people, culturally diverse communities, people with disability, and communities in regional and disaster-impacted areas.

I urge the formal recognition of CACD within the REVIVE framework; the establishment of a national CACD entity within Creative Australia; investment in workforce development; funding reform toward long-term, place-based models; strengthened national data and evaluation systems; and the embedding of CACD across government portfolios including health, climate, disaster management and regional development.

To realise the vision of REVIVE — “a place for every story” — CACD must be formally recognised, properly measured and adequately resourced as a cornerstone of Australia's cultural future.