

CREATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION 

Submission to the Office for the Arts

Towards a New National Cultural Policy

A Policy Research Submission on Sector Misclassification and the Case for a Distinct Cultural Work and Provenance Sector

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Executive Summary

This submission advances a single, evidence-based proposition: the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector does not exist within Australia's national cultural policy framework — not because it has been overlooked, but because it has been systematically misclassified. For decades, the functions of heritage protection, intangible cultural property safeguarding, provenance verification, and the workforce of practitioners who transmit cultural knowledge across generations have been administered, without basis, as a subset of the Arts sector. The consequences are structural and cumulative.

The five pillars of *Revive: A Place for Every Story, A Story for Every Place* (2023) distribute functions belonging to two categorically distinct sectors across a single policy framework without identifying either. Three pillars — First Nations First, *A Place for Every Story*, and Strong Cultural Infrastructure — describe the functions of the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector. Two pillars — Centrality of the Artist and Engaging the Audience — describe the functions of the Arts sector. These sectors have different workforces, different outputs, different legislative precedents, different international frameworks, and different institutional requirements. They cannot be governed by the same policy mechanism.

The scholarly distinction between culture as a system of transmission and the arts as a domain of expression has been established in the literature since at least Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* (1958) and is foundational to UNESCO's own definitional framework. It is not a contested proposition. What is contested — and what this submission argues — is that Australia's national cultural policy has proceeded for three consecutive policy cycles as though the distinction does not exist.

Japan established the Agency for Cultural Affairs in 1968, recognising that culture requires a distinct institutional and legislative home, separate from the arts. The European Union extended Geographical Indication protection to craft and industrial products in 2023, formally recognising the economic and cultural value of provenance in heritage production. The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) — to which Australia remains not a State Party despite committing in *Revive* to 'considering' ratification in January 2023 — was drafted precisely to govern the sector this submission is naming.

The Creative Women's Association has, in twelve months of entirely volunteer-funded operation, built the operational architecture this sector requires: the Southern Cross Registry, the Heritage Skills Registry, the Cultural Practitioner Register, the Cultural Work Practitioner Classification, the Southern Cross Mark certification system, and the legislative framework for the proposed Australian Cultural Work and Provenance Act. Every instrument is live, publicly accessible, and functioning. This is work that would ordinarily have been commissioned, funded, and delivered by government.

This submission requests that the next National Cultural Policy correctly name the sector these instruments are designed to govern, commit to the legislative and institutional steps required to give it formal existence in Australian law, and resource the organisation that built the infrastructure to deliver it at scale. Any implementation of the frameworks described in this submission must engage the Creative Women's Association as the originating institution. CWA's operational instruments — the Registry, the Classification, the Mark, the legislative framework — are the intellectual and operational property of the Creative Women's Association, are legally documented as such, and are held under active legal counsel. They are offered here in the public interest. They are not available for replication, reassignment, or administrative absorption by any existing government body or agency.

Australia does not need to design this sector from scratch. It needs to fund and recognise the organisation that already did.

1. The Conceptual Foundation: Culture and the Arts are Distinct Domains

1.1 A distinction established in the scholarly record

The distinction between culture as a governing system and the arts as a domain of practice within that system is not a contemporary proposition. It is foundational to the social theory of culture and has been established in the academic literature for more than a century.

Tylor's canonical definition of 1871 establishes culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor, E.B. (1871). *Primitive Culture*. John Murray, London). On this definition, the arts constitute one element within the larger system of culture — a component, not an equivalent. Tylor's taxonomy positions the arts alongside law, custom, and knowledge as coordinate elements of a governing whole.

Raymond Williams, in *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961), traced the historical process by which the word ‘culture’ was progressively narrowed from its original sense — the cultivation of human faculties and social life — to a more restricted association with the arts and aesthetic production. Williams identified this narrowing as historically contingent rather than definitionally correct. In *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976), he documented three distinct senses of the term: as a process of human development; as a particular way of life; and as the works and practices of intellectual and artistic activity. The third sense — the narrowest — is the sense in which Australian cultural policy has consistently operated.

“What at last came through, theoretically, in the significant new keywords of ‘culture’ and ‘society’, was the now familiar model: of the arts on the one hand, the social structure on the other, with the assumption of significant relations between them.” — Williams, R. (1986). *The Uses of Cultural Theory*. *New Left Review*, 1/158.

Clifford Geertz, in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), defined culture as “the webs of significance” that human beings have themselves spun — the inherited systems of meaning within which social action takes place. Geertz's framework positions the arts as one set of practices through which cultural meaning is expressed and transmitted, but explicitly not coextensive with culture itself.

Bourdieu's field theory (*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 1984) establishes art as a social field — a structured space of practices with its own logic of production and reception — that operates within and in relation to the broader field of culture. The arts field has distinctive properties: it requires an audience; its products are valorised through reception;

its practitioners are distinguished by the claim to aesthetic autonomy. These properties are not shared by all cultural workers.

The scholarly consensus is consistent and unambiguous: culture is the governing system; the arts are one domain of practice within it. A policy framework that treats these terms as interchangeable applies a definition that the relevant academic literature explicitly rejected as analytically inadequate more than sixty years ago.

1.2 The causal relationship: how the arts came to be used as a cultural delivery mechanism

The conflation of culture with the arts in policy discourse is not accidental. It has a traceable intellectual and institutional history. In the nineteenth century, under the influence of Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), the arts — and particularly literature — were deliberately positioned as instruments of cultural elevation: the means by which the civilising capacities of “culture” (understood as the best that has been thought and said) would be transmitted to a mass population. Arnold's framework was explicitly pedagogical and hierarchical: the arts were to be used to cultivate cultural life, not to represent it.

“The idea of culture, Williams argues, arose in the late eighteenth century as a response both to industrialisation and to the growth of democracy... culture — particularly in the narrower form of ‘the arts’ — was a means of challenging these developments, but also of identifying alternatives.” — Buckingham, D. (2019). Raymond Williams on Culture and Education. davidbuckingham.net.

This instrumentalisation of the arts as a vector for cultural policy created a policy architecture in which arts programs became the default delivery mechanism for cultural objectives. Funding bodies were established to support arts production; cultural objectives were pursued through arts grants; cultural participation was measured through attendance at arts events. The arts were enlisted to do culture's work. In the process, the categorical distinction between the two was progressively obscured.

The consequence for cultural work and provenance is direct. Cultural practices that do not produce artworks for audiences — heritage craft, textile production, oral tradition transmission, food culture preservation, knowledge-transfer practice — fell outside the arts delivery mechanism and therefore outside the policy frameworks built around it. They were neither funded nor governed. They were not named. The sector that sustains them does not appear in national economic statistics, workforce classifications, or legislative frameworks. It is the absent sector that the arts policy apparatus has, for decades, been expected to service as a secondary function — and has, structurally, been incapable of doing.

The relationship between culture and the arts is causal and reciprocal: culture generates the conditions within which the arts flourish; the arts, at their best, articulate and renew cultural meaning. But when arts policy is directed to function as cultural policy, the causal relationship is inverted. Culture is reduced to what the arts sector can deliver. And what the arts sector cannot deliver — the provenance chain, the heritage skills registry, the practitioner classification, the intangible heritage safeguarding mechanism — is left without governance.

2. The Analytical Failure: Pillar-by-Pillar Assessment

The five pillars of Revive are assessed below against the governing function, output, intended beneficiary, and legislative precedent of each. The analysis demonstrates that three pillars describe functions belonging to the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector, two pillars describe functions belonging to the Arts sector, and one pillar — Pillar 4 — contains the infrastructure requirements of both sectors in a single, ungovernable framework. The table below provides a summary; the analytical basis for each assessment follows.

Pillar	Governing Sector	Governing function, output, and purpose
Pillar 1 First Nations First	Cultural Work & Provenance Sector	Cultural heritage; intangible cultural property; knowledge transmission across generations; UNESCO ICH safeguarding obligations; First Nations cultural IP. Output: sustained cultural continuity. Audience: none. Purpose: protection and transmission.
Pillar 2 A Place for Every Story	Cultural Work & Provenance Sector	Place-based production; provenance; maker identity; community cultural practice; geographic cultural continuity. Output: certified cultural goods and documented heritage practice. Audience: none required. Purpose: recognition and protection.
Pillar 3 Centrality of the Artist	Arts Sector	Individual creative expression; artistic identity; creative process; arts labour conditions; professional artist as worker. Output: artworks. Audience: assumed and required for meaning. Purpose: expression and reception.
Pillar 4 Strong Cultural Infrastructure	Misallocated — two incompatible sectors	Arts infrastructure (venues, companies, funding bodies) and cultural infrastructure (provenance systems, heritage registers, certification bodies, legislative frameworks) are categorically distinct and cannot be administered by the same policy mechanism. See Section 4.
Pillar 5 Engaging the Audience	Arts Sector	Distribution; discoverability; audience reach; marketing; digital engagement; access. Output: audience experience. Audience: central and defining. Purpose: connection and consumption.

Pillars 3 and 5: Arts Sector

Pillar 3 (Centrality of the Artist) and Pillar 5 (Engaging the Audience) are correctly characterised as Arts sector pillars. Pillar 3 addresses the conditions of creative labour — workplace safety, creative rights, arts education, and recognition in the broader economy — for practitioners whose work produces outputs intended for reception by audiences. Pillar 5 addresses the conditions of reception — distribution, discoverability, and engagement. Both pillars assume the fundamental structure of arts production: a practitioner produces a work; an audience receives it. The relationship between practitioner and audience is constitutive of the arts field, as Bourdieu's field theory establishes.

Both pillars have legitimate institutional homes within the current Creative Australia architecture. They do not require reconfiguration. What they require — and what this submission does not address — is adequate resourcing within that architecture.

Pillars 1 and 2: Cultural Work and Provenance Sector

Pillar 1 (First Nations First) and Pillar 2 (A Place for Every Story) describe functions that belong to the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector. Their governing concern is not artistic expression directed at audiences. It is the protection, transmission, and continuity of cultural knowledge, practice, and identity across generations.

Pillar 1's governing obligation — the recognition and protection of First Nations cultural knowledge and intangible cultural heritage — is addressed in international law through the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). That Convention's safeguarding framework is not an arts framework. It is a heritage protection, provenance, and transmission framework. It establishes obligations to identify practitioners, document knowledge systems, support transmission, and assign institutional accountability for safeguarding delivery. Australia is not a State Party. Placing these obligations within an arts policy framework — one built around funding individual creative works for audience reception — is not merely inadequate. It is structurally incompatible.

A First Nations cultural practitioner whose practice is the transmission of ceremony, language, textile tradition, or ecological knowledge to younger generations is not an artist in the sense that

Pillars 3 and 5 assume. Her output is not a work for an audience. It is a living knowledge system that must be transmitted or it will cease to exist. The governance framework she requires is not an arts grant mechanism. It is a heritage safeguarding institution with legislative backing, a practitioner register, and an accountable statutory authority. Placing her within an arts policy framework — requiring her to compete for project grants alongside performing artists — is, as the UNESCO framework makes clear, an inappropriate and inadequate response to the actual nature of the obligation.

Pillar 2 (A Place for Every Story) similarly addresses place-based cultural practice, community cultural participation, and the contribution of all Australians as producers of culture. The governing function of this pillar is the recognition and sustaining of cultural diversity in its broadest sense — including the craft traditions, heritage skills, food cultures, and community practices that constitute Australia's living cultural heritage. These are not arts practices in the audience-directed sense of Pillars 3 and 5. They are cultural practices in the transmission, provenance, and continuity sense of UNESCO's intangible heritage framework.

Pillar 4: The infrastructure failure

Pillar 4 (Strong Cultural Infrastructure) is the pillar within which the conflation of two sectors becomes most consequential. The pillar is designed to govern the institutional conditions that sustain cultural life: the venues, organisations, training bodies, funding mechanisms, and systems that enable culture to be produced, transmitted, and sustained over time. Within the Arts sector, this means performance venues, arts companies, conservatoria, and screen institutions. Within the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector, it means something categorically different.

Cultural infrastructure, in the sense required by Pillars 1 and 2, comprises: a national heritage skills registry capable of identifying what knowledge exists and where it is at risk; a practitioner register assigning professional status and enabling credentialling; a certification and provenance verification system capable of attaching legal and commercial weight to verified cultural production; a workforce classification framework with defined remuneration standards; a legislative instrument establishing the sector in law; and a statutory authority with accountability for delivery. None of these instruments exist within the current Revive implementation architecture. None of them can be built using arts grant programs. And none of them have been built, because Pillar 4 does not distinguish between arts infrastructure and cultural infrastructure, and therefore cannot govern the latter.

The consequence is not merely a policy gap. It is a market failure. Cultural production without provenance verification cannot command provenance-based premium pricing. Heritage practitioners without certification cannot command certified-practitioner remuneration. Knowledge without a registry cannot be identified, protected, or transmitted through formal institutional channels. The economic value of cultural production — documented extensively by the European Commission's Geographical Indication research, which finds that GI-certified products command on average double the market price of uncertified equivalents (European Commission, 2019) — is inaccessible to Australian cultural producers because the infrastructure that would enable them to capture it does not exist.

Pillar 4 is not a pillar within the existing framework. It is the description of an entire sector that the existing framework has not built. It cannot be addressed by adding resources to the current architecture. It requires a new architecture: a sector designation, a legislative instrument, and a statutory authority with a mandate that is neither defined by nor accountable to the arts funding apparatus.

3. The Provenance Gap: What Other Jurisdictions Have Recognised

3.1 The economic value of provenance in cultural production

The proposition that cultural heritage and provenance constitute a distinct economic asset — separable from artistic expression and requiring distinct governance — is well established in international trade and intellectual property law. It is the basis of the European Union's Geographical Indication (GI) framework, which extends legal protection to goods whose qualities, reputation, or characteristics are attributable to their geographic and cultural origin.

The European Commission's 2019 study on the economic value of EU quality schemes found that agro-food and drink products protected by GI designations represented a sales value of €74.76 billion, with GI-certified products commanding on average double the market price of comparable uncertified products. In September 2023, the EU extended GI protection to craft and industrial products, explicitly recognising “the cultural significance and economic contributions of artisans who have sustained traditions for generations” (Fashion Law Journal, March 2024).

“As a forged painting and the original one may not differ at all materially, while still being quite different artworks, in the same way a GI cannot be equated to its material constitution: some aspects of its making are key to its identity.” — Vadi, V. (2018). Intangible Cultural Heritage and Trade.

The wool farmer in the Riverina whose fibre enters a vertically integrated provenance chain — from paddock through mill to finished certified cloth — is not performing an artistic act in the audience-directed sense that Pillars 3 and 5 assume. She is producing a cultural good with a verifiable provenance that constitutes its primary market differentiator. A luxury fashion house such as Gucci commands premium pricing not on the basis of artistic expression alone but on verified cultural provenance — the documented chain from material origin through traditional craft process to certified output. Australian producers cannot access this premium without a provenance verification infrastructure. That infrastructure is not an arts policy function. It is a cultural sector and trade policy function. And in Australia, it does not exist.

3.2 Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs: the institutional model

Japan established the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Bunka-cho) in 1968 under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The Agency's mandate is explicitly distinct from arts administration. It governs intangible cultural properties, traditional craft designation, cultural heritage protection, cultural property conservation, and the Living National Treasure system — formally, the designation of Holders of Important Intangible Cultural Properties.

The Living National Treasure system provides government stipends, technical preservation support, and transmission assistance to bearers of irreplaceable cultural knowledge. It is not a prize. It is not an arts grant. It is a workforce recognition and retention mechanism backed by legislation and administered by a statutory authority. It recognises that certain cultural knowledge — a specific dyeing technique, a particular form of ceramic production, a textile tradition requiring decades of apprenticeship — constitutes a national cultural asset that will cease to exist if the practitioners who hold it are not formally recognised, supported, and enabled to transmit it.

Japan's model demonstrates that the governance of cultural work and provenance requires a dedicated institutional architecture that is neither a funding body for the arts nor a sub-program within an arts policy framework. It requires legislation, a statutory authority, a practitioner register, and a transmission support mechanism. Japan has had all of these since 1950. Australia has none of them.

3.3 The UNESCO ratification gap

Australia's National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, acknowledged Australia's non-ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) in the following terms:

"The Government is also considering ratifying the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as part of its response to the Inquiry." — *Revive: A Place for Every Story, A Story for Every Place. Pillar 1: First Nations First, p.33. Australian Government, January 2023.*

This statement was published in January 2023. Australia has not ratified the Convention. As of May 2026, Australia remains not a State Party — confirmed by Nicholas Tan, Associate Programme Specialist, Living Heritage Entity, UNESCO (April 2026). The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Canada, and New Zealand have all ratified. Australia's non-ratification is not a technical omission. It is a governance position: Australia has not assigned institutional responsibility for intangible heritage safeguarding because it has not identified the sector that safeguarding is required to govern.

The Convention's safeguarding framework requires State Parties to: take necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage; identify and define intangible heritage through inventories; establish competent bodies for safeguarding; adopt a general policy aimed at promoting the function of intangible heritage in society; and designate or establish bodies responsible for safeguarding (Article 13, UNESCO ICH Convention 2003). These are not arts policy functions. They are heritage sector governance functions that require a designated statutory authority, a practitioner register, and legislative backing. Australia cannot ratify without that institutional infrastructure in place. CWA has built it.

The intellectual property dimension compounds the governance gap. As the scholarly literature on GIs and intangible heritage documents, the UNESCO ICH Convention does not in itself establish intellectual property rights, leaving practitioners — particularly First Nations practitioners — without the legal protections that a provenance certification system would provide (Chianti to Kimchi, Cambridge University Press, 2017). The absence of a provenance certification infrastructure is therefore simultaneously a cultural governance failure and an intellectual property protection failure.

4. The Infrastructure Deficit: Eight Criteria, Six Absent

CWA's Shadow Implementation Audit of Revive (February 2026) applied an eight-criterion infrastructure test to the current policy framework, benchmarking each criterion against the equivalent standard established in comparable workforce sectors. The audit methodology draws on established principles of public sector performance auditing. The findings are set out below.

Infrastructure Criterion	Finding	Comparable sector standard
National standards of cultural practice	ABSENT	Teaching (AITSL); Medicine (AMC); Nursing (AHPRA); Trades (Training.gov.au)
Certification and accreditation pathways for practitioners	ABSENT	Teaching (VIT Register); Nursing (AHPRA); Allied Health (AHPRA); Trades (Training.gov.au)
Provenance verification and authorship protection mechanisms	ABSENT	Harris Tweed Authority; EU Geographical Indication register; IP Australia (food and beverages only)
Workforce classification integrated into national statistical data	ABSENT	ANZSCO codes exist; cultural work as a distinct category within ANZSCO: absent
Procurement frameworks requiring verified cultural practice	ABSENT	Commonwealth Procurement Rules; no cultural work equivalence provision
UNESCO-aligned intangible heritage safeguarding mechanisms	PARTIAL	Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs (1968); UK ICH Programme; New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa ICH framework
Mid-career retention and continuity mechanisms	ABSENT	Teaching (VATL Teaching Excellence Program, fully subsidised); Medicine (RACGP CPD fellowships); Trades (apprenticeship completion payments)
Designated statutory authority with accountability and delivery mandate	ABSENT	Every comparable workforce sector has a designated statutory body. Cultural Work and Provenance Sector: none.

The consistent response from arts funding bodies and ministerial offices to representations about these gaps has been to redirect practitioners toward existing grant programs. This submission notes the categorical inadequacy of that response. Grant programs are instruments for funding individual projects within an existing sector architecture. They are not instruments for building sector architecture where none exists.

The appropriate analogy is not 'apply for a grant to pursue your creative practice.' The appropriate analogy is: would a government responsible for developing a national teaching workforce direct qualified teachers to apply for discretionary project grants in lieu of establishing a national teacher registration system, a workforce classification, a minimum pay scale, and a statutory professional standards body? The answer is self-evidently no. The infrastructure exists because the sector was correctly named and correctly governed. For the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector, it has not been.

CWA has built, without government funding and through volunteer labour, the operational instruments that the sector requires: the Heritage Skills Registry; the Cultural Practitioner Register; the Cultural Work Practitioner Classification (an eight-level remuneration framework benchmarked against the Victorian Teachers Agreement 2022–2025); the Southern Cross Mark certification system; and the legislative framework for the proposed Australian Cultural Work and Provenance Act. These instruments are live, publicly accessible, and functioning. They require legislative recognition and a statutory home. They do not require redesign.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are addressed to the next National Cultural Policy. Each recommendation addresses a distinct structural requirement. Together they constitute the minimum necessary action to formally establish the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector in Australian law, governance, and market infrastructure.

REC 1

Introduce the Australian Cultural Work and Provenance Act and establish the Australian Cultural Protection Authority

Part A: That the Australian Government develop and introduce the Australian Cultural Work and Provenance Act as the founding legislative instrument naming and establishing the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector in Australian law – providing for provenance rights, practitioner classification, certification frameworks, and the Southern Cross Registry. Part B: That the Act establish the Australian Cultural Protection Authority as the administering statutory authority, with the Creative Women's Association's operational instruments – the Heritage Skills Registry, the Cultural Practitioner Register, and the Cultural Work Practitioner Classification – as its designed institutional foundation. These instruments are live and operating. They require statutory recognition, not further development.

REC 2

Formal sector recognition: recognise the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector as distinct from the Arts sector

That the next National Cultural Policy formally recognise the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector as a distinct economic and cultural sector with its own policy framework, workforce architecture, legislative basis, and institutional home, separate from the Arts sector and from the Creative Australia architecture. The policy framework for the Cultural Work and Provenance Sector should be modelled on infrastructure governance – consistent with the portfolio precedent established by Revive's location within Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts – not on arts program delivery.

REC 3

Ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)

That Australia ratify the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and become a State Party, moving from the position stated in Revive of 'considering ratification' (January 2023) to a committed ratification timeline within the next policy cycle. CWA has already commenced preparation of its NGO accreditation application under the Convention. The UNESCO Living Heritage Entity confirmed CWA's eligibility for accreditation in correspondence dated February 2026. That the next National Cultural Policy formally note this development, commit to a ratification timeline, and recognise CWA's accreditation process as the institutional bridge for Australia's domestic intangible heritage safeguarding framework.

REC 4

Recognise and resource the Southern Cross Registry as Australia's provenance verification infrastructure

That the next National Cultural Policy formally recognise the need for a national provenance verification and registration infrastructure for cultural goods, and that the Australian Cultural Protection Authority adopt the Southern Cross Registry — currently operated by the Creative Women's Association — as its designated provenance infrastructure. The Southern Cross Registry issues Unique Provenance Identifiers and Registered Provenance Credentials across the full cultural and craft production chain: farmers, processors, weavers, designers, lace makers, and craft practitioners. Registration supports Geographical Indication applications, EU Digital Product Passport compliance, and commercial provenance attribution. This infrastructure is live and publicly accessible at creativewomensassociation.org/provenance-rights. Without legislative recognition and a statutory home, Australian cultural producers cannot access the provenance premium that GI-certified international competitors already command. The European Commission's 2019 research documents GI-certified products commanding on average double the market price of uncertified equivalents. The infrastructure to close this gap exists. It requires statutory adoption, not further development.

REC 5

Designate the Heritage Skills Registry as Australia's national intangible cultural heritage practitioner record

That the next National Cultural Policy commit to the establishment and statutory recognition of a national Heritage Skills Registry, and that the Australian Cultural Protection Authority adopt the Heritage Skills Registry — currently operated by the Creative Women's Association — as the designated national record for intangible cultural heritage practitioners. The Heritage Skills Registry identifies, documents, and connects practitioners of heritage craft, textile traditions, food culture preservation, oral tradition transmission, and other living knowledge systems at risk of loss. The Registry operates in alignment with the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), which requires State Parties to identify and document intangible heritage through inventories and to establish competent bodies for safeguarding (Article 13). Australia cannot satisfy the institutional obligations of ratification without a designated practitioner record. The Heritage Skills Registry is that record. It is publicly accessible at creativewomensassociation.org/heritage-skills. That the policy commit to First Nations pathway integration and regional practitioner identification as priority implementation elements, with funding for practitioner identification, documentation, and connection to formal credentialling.

REC 6

Fund cultural practitioner pathways on terms equivalent to the teaching profession

That the Australian Government fund the Cultural Excellence Program and the Cultural Work Practitioner Classification assessment and credentialling pathway on terms equivalent to the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership's Teaching Excellence Program: full subsidisation for participants across all states and territories; participation subsidies of up to \$7,000 per participant (equivalent to casual relief teaching support); regional travel and accommodation support; and First Nations pathways subsidies. Cultural knowledge transmission is teaching work. It meets the same professional criteria, produces the same community outcomes, and requires the same depth of expertise and years of practice. The practitioners who carry it are entitled to equivalent institutional recognition and support.

About the Creative Women's Association

The Creative Women's Association (CWA, [REDACTED]) is an independent Australian non-governmental organisation established on 30 November 2025 and operating at the intersection of cultural policy, economic measurement, and provenance. CWA is based in Geelong, Victoria.

CWA has submitted formally to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (Human Rights Subcommittee, May 2026); the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (Australia–EU Free Trade Agreement); and the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee (Revive supplementary submission, April 2026). CWA is engaged with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Office of Global Trade Negotiations on the A–EU FTA Geographical Indication framework.

CWA's published frameworks include: the Cultural Work Practitioner Classification (April 2026); Working Papers WP-001 through WP-004 (April–May 2026); the Shadow Implementation Audit of Revive (February 2026); the Heritage Skills Registry; the Cultural Practitioner Register; the Southern Cross Mark certification system; and the proposed Australian Cultural Work and Provenance Act legislative framework. All are publicly accessible at creativewomensassociation.org.

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