

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469852

Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The policy should embrace individual identity as well as identity as a cultural group. Australia has become a melting pot of wonderful and diverse cultures but young people (particularly) need to subscribe to a cultural definition and experience which is not limited by race, religion or socio-economic norms. A sense of belonging, connection and expression is more fluid than that and is integral to positive mental health and well-being and an understanding of cultural identity ties directly into this. We shouldn't be pigeon-holing people into 'district' cultural groups (so much) or drawing sharp lines between them but encouraging resonance between cultures and identifying the intersections between these groups. This way we can break down the 'us and them' mentality that drives discriminatory practices and encourage exploration, understanding and caring, while still valuing and respecting our different cultural expressions in a more individualistic sense. Get young people to think about culture in a non-prescriptive way - the commonalities between them as well as differences which are just different colours painted from the same palette.

Bottom line: identify and celebrate our different cultures but do more to highlight their similarities.