

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469869

Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm writing as a practising visual artist to share feedback on Pillar 1, First Nations First. I want to say upfront that I value Indigenous Australian culture, its antiquity and its connection to country. These are genuinely irreplaceable and worth protecting. My concern isn't with celebrating that culture, it's with the policy framework built around it. Positioning any one cultural tradition \,at the centre\, of a national cultural policy sits in direct tension with Pillar 2, which promises \,a place for every story\, and recognises \,the contribution of all Australians as creators of culture.\, You can't genuinely hold both positions. Either all Australian stories matter equally, or one is centred above the rest. The current framing chooses the latter while claiming the former.

My concern is that structuring cultural policy around racial and ancestral identity rather than artistic merit or genuine socioeconomic need creates a framework that is exclusionary by design. Australia is one of the most diverse nations on earth. We have communities from every part of the world, all carrying their own histories, traditions and creative practices. A national cultural policy that formally centres one racial group's stories above all others doesn't reflect that diversity - it contradicts it.

If the genuine goal is to address disadvantage and underrepresentation, the more effective and defensible approach is to target support based on socioeconomic disadvantage and geographic remoteness. Those criteria would reach remote Indigenous communities that genuinely need support, without building a racial hierarchy into the policy framework itself.

A truly inclusive cultural policy treats every Australian artist as an artist first, not as a representative of their ancestry.