

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469874

Public

Individual

Sally Reay

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I support the submission from the national alliance of Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) organisations and individuals. We argue that Australia's next National Cultural Policy must recognise and invest in CACD as essential cultural infrastructure. As outlined in the full submission, CACD operates at the intersection of creativity and community, delivering social cohesion, resilience and meaningful cultural participation across the continent.

Despite its national reach and impact, CACD is not explicitly recognised within the current REVIVE framework. This omission creates a critical policy gap. It limits visibility of a cross-sector practice that delivers on national priorities of equity, access and participation, and constrains the capacity of government to mobilise creative practice in response to compounding challenges including climate impacts, disasters, inequality and social fragmentation. Without CACD, REVIVE risks overlooking the primary mechanism through which many Australians engage meaningfully with arts and culture.

CACD is not a niche artform. It is a methodology embedded across disciplines and sectors including health, education, justice, disaster management and climate adaptation. Only 5–6% of national arts investment is explicitly attributed to CACD, this significantly underrepresents CACD's reach, as it is dispersed across multiple funding streams and not consistently measured. This systemic undercounting leads to undervaluation and misalignment with policy commitments to inclusion and cultural democracy.

CACD delivers outcomes across multiple domains. It strengthens social cohesion and belonging, improves wellbeing, builds local economies and workforce pathways, enhances civic participation, and supports environmental awareness and climate adaptation. Crucially, it provides the relational infrastructure that enables communities to respond to complex challenges and to participate in shaping their cultural futures.

CACD directly advances all five pillars of REVIVE. It supports First Nations self-determination, ensures diverse stories are visible, recognises community-based artists as essential workers, and shifts engagement from passive audiences to active participation. Its impact is particularly significant for priority communities, including First Nations peoples, young people, culturally diverse communities, disabled communities, and those in regional and disaster-impacted areas.

To address this gap, the submission proposes formal recognition of CACD within the policy; the establishment of a national CACD entity within Creative Australia; investment in workforce development; funding reforms toward long-term, place-based models; improved national data and evaluation systems; and embedding CACD across government portfolios including health, climate, disaster management and regional development.

At a time of increasing climate instability, social fragmentation and compounding disasters, Australia requires approaches that build trust, connection and collective capacity. These are not outcomes policy alone can deliver. CACD provides the creative and relational mechanisms to achieve them.

To realise the vision of REVIVE— a place for every story—CACD must be recognised, properly measured, and resourced as a cornerstone of Australia’s cultural future. Without this, the policy risks falling short of its commitments to equity, participation and inclusion