

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469901

Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am a visual artist who changed direction as a student from Maths and Science teaching to Art teaching. From the small city of Adelaide I travelled to the big city of New York for further studies, before moving out to the country in New York State, learning to be part of a small community, starting a family and teaching art. On returning to Australia 15 years later, I established my own business as an Artist and Designer for Public Places and chose commissions from predominately regional places. Following 30 years of this practice, I am now living in Victor Harbor SA and focussed on producing exhibition works. The experience has given me an understanding of identity, connection to place and a commitment to promoting and presenting the physical experience of the country.

Regional, rural and remote communities have developed on the basis of 'doing for themselves'. Ingenuity has been their answer to the disadvantages of distance and limited financial resources. Infrastructure and supplies are always valued, but when not available, creativity comes to the fore and ingenuity finds an answer.

As a visual artist whose source of creativity is the physical world of the country, I've observed that prevailing attitudes in the regions do not expect arts practice to match the importance of food production or manufacturing. It raises two questions:

1) How can acceptance and respect for the Arts as a daily occupation be shown to young people in the remote, rural and regional areas (RRR areas)?

In addition to their building a wide base of skills and the willingness to adjust to a variety of outcomes, in order to be adequately employed for living, young RRR people need to know that Arts practice is a needed and respected aspiration.

Public celebration by home communities of Arts successes - individual and collective - would show them a pathway to the acceptance and respect of their community.

The identification and acknowledgement through the Arts of RRR perspectives expresses the kind of pride and confidence in identity that increases its value – to residents, visitors and business.

2) How can ambition in Arts Practice be fostered in young people, especially in RRR areas?

The current program of e.g. the NGA and AGSA to share works out of their public collections is highly effective in demonstrating excellence to RRR audiences. An excellent counterpart is represented in the initiatives of organizations like Country Arts SA. It has brought exhibitions of regional artworks and artists to Adelaide city centre that have proved effective in demonstrating the strength of RRR perspectives and identity to an urban audience.

The regions also need talent scouts, e.g. Professional Curators and Arts Writers, to be encouraged to visit, identify and select the people who have talent and potential. Curators and Arts Writers could bring to the task advantageous outcomes in important exhibitions and publications. They would build awareness of RRR artists and identity and their place in the context of Australia's present.