

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469904

Public

Individual

Andrew Clark

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I bring over 15 years' experience working in long-term community arts and cultural development (CACD), including managing local art centres and delivering community development projects. Throughout my career, I've seen first-hand the powerful social impact of participatory, community-led arts practice. While this work is often grounded locally, many of the projects I've led have grown to achieve national outcomes, including presentations at multi-arts festivals and major galleries.

As an Arts Administrator and CACD practitioner, I strongly believe that Australia's next National Cultural Policy must explicitly recognise and invest in CACD as essential cultural infrastructure. CACD sits at the intersection of creativity and community—building social cohesion, resilience, and meaningful cultural participation across the country.

Despite its significant reach and impact, CACD is not clearly recognised within the current REVIVE framework. This creates a major policy gap. It limits visibility of a practice that already delivers on national priorities such as equity, access, and participation, and reduces the government's ability to use creative approaches to respond to complex challenges like climate change, disasters, inequality, and social fragmentation. Without acknowledging CACD, the policy risks overlooking the main way many Australians actively engage with arts and culture.

CACD is not a niche area—it's a widely used approach that operates across sectors including health, education, justice, disaster recovery, and climate adaptation. While only around 5–6% of national arts funding is attributed to CACD, this significantly underestimates its true reach because it is spread across different funding streams and not consistently measured. This undercounting leads to undervaluation and weak alignment with policy commitments around inclusion and cultural democracy.

The outcomes of CACD are wide-ranging. It strengthens community connection and belonging, improves well-being, supports local economies and career pathways, increases civic participation, youth justice diversion and builds cultural identity and pride. Importantly, it creates the relationships and structures communities need to respond to complex challenges and shape their own cultural futures.

CACD also directly supports all five pillars of REVIVE. It advances First Nations self-determination, amplifies diverse voices, recognises community-based artists as essential contributors, and encourages active participation rather than passive consumption. Its impact is especially important for priority groups, including First Nations communities, young people, culturally diverse communities, disabled people, and those in regional or remote areas.

To address this gap, the policy should formally recognise CACD, establish a dedicated national CACD body within Creative Australia, invest in workforce development, and shift funding toward long-term, place-based models. It should also improve national data collection and evaluation, and embed CACD approaches across government portfolios such as health, climate, disaster management, and regional development.

At a time of growing social division, Australia needs approaches that build trust, connection, and collective capacity. CACD provides exactly these tools.

If REVIVE is to truly deliver on its vision of "a place for every story," CACD must be recognised, properly measured, and resourced a