

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469986

Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the review of Australia's National Cultural Policy, Revive. As a First Nations creative working across live performance, music, storytelling and children's content, I strongly support the policy's commitment to "First Nations First" and recognising artists as workers who play an essential role in Australia's cultural identity and future.

The "First Nations First" pillar must remain more than a symbolic box tick. It needs to continue being backed through long-term investment, leadership opportunities and genuine Indigenous-led decision making across the arts sector. First Nations storytelling is foundational to this country. It carries knowledge, language, humour, connection to Country and community, and living culture that has existed for tens of thousands of years.

Through my own work touring schools, theatres and festivals around Australia, I've seen firsthand how powerful storytelling, music and shared cultural experiences can be in bringing communities together. Audiences, particularly young people, are looking for work that feels honest, grounded and connected. First Nations-led stories continue to resonate strongly because they come from lived experience and reflect a perspective unique to this country.

Importantly, support for First Nations creatives needs to exist across the full creative landscape, from grassroots community projects through to live touring, digital content, screen production and international opportunities. Too often, artists are expected to carry cultural responsibility while navigating short-term funding cycles and unstable career pathways. Greater long-term investment is needed so creatives can build sustainable careers and businesses over time.

The "Centrality of the Artist" pillar is equally important. Artists are workers, yet creative labour is still regularly undervalued despite the enormous social and economic contribution the sector makes. For many First Nations creatives, the work also extends beyond performance into mentorship, education, community engagement and cultural leadership.

As an independent creator developing work across live performance, music and screen, I understand both the opportunities and challenges that come with building original creative projects from the ground up. Independent artists and small creative companies are often some of the most innovative voices in the sector, yet many operate without the long-term infrastructure or support needed for sustainability.

Continued investment in regional touring, youth engagement, arts education, digital storytelling and pathways for emerging First Nations creatives will be essential moving forward. Cultural policy should also continue recognising the importance of intergenerational knowledge-sharing and creating safe, culturally led environments where young people can see creative careers as viable and valuable.

As the Government looks toward the next chapter of national cultural policy, it is vital that First Nations leadership remains embedded at the centre of decision-making and that artists continue to be recognised as essential contributors to Australia's cultural and creative future.