

National Cultural Policy Submission

1470060

Public

Organisation

SPACEMRKT



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

SPACEMRKT strongly supports the development of a new National Cultural Policy that builds on Revive while moving beyond recognition of cultural value toward long-term system design and infrastructure thinking.

Australia does not lack creativity. What is currently missing are the systems, governance structures, investment settings and delivery models that allow cultural life to become visible, sustainable and embedded within everyday communities.

One of the greatest barriers facing the cultural sector is access to affordable, flexible and appropriately supported space for cultural production, experimentation and participation. Across Perth, Fremantle and many regional centres, vacant shopfronts, dormant upper floors, ageing commercial buildings and stalled development sites sit alongside increasing pressure on artists, creative practitioners and small cultural organisations. The issue is not simply one of vacancy, but of policy and market settings that continue to reward inactivity over participation and public benefit.

SPACEMRKT operates within this space as a cultural infrastructure and creative placemaking organisation focused on the adaptive reuse and activation of underutilised buildings. Through partnerships with local government, private property owners, developers and community organisations, we facilitate creative studios, exhibitions, pop ups, artist residencies, cultural programming and community-led initiatives that transform vacant spaces into active civic and cultural infrastructure.

Importantly, cultural infrastructure must be understood as more than buildings alone. While galleries, theatres and major institutions remain important, infrastructure also includes the people, programming, operations, governance, technical capability, touring systems, digital access and local relationships that make cultural life possible. Without investment in these systems, physical infrastructure alone cannot generate meaningful cultural participation or long-term civic value.

Our experience demonstrates that artists, cultural producers

and intermediary organisations are increasingly functioning as civic infrastructure themselves. Creative activation improves perceptions of place, increases public participation, supports local economies and helps build confidence within transitional precincts. However, the intermediary layer between government, property owners and creative communities remains under-recognised within current policy settings.

The next National Cultural Policy should adopt a broader definition of cultural infrastructure and recognise adaptive reuse, temporary activation and creative access to space as essential cultural strategies. This should include support for intermediary organisations, incentives for landlords who provide access to vacant space, reduced barriers to temporary activation, stronger alignment between government investment, and long-term operational and programming support alongside capital funding. We also support a national “Percentage for Programming” scheme, where a portion of major civic or infrastructure investment supports ongoing cultural programming and activation.

For Western Australia, national policy must also recognise the realities of geography, regional isolation and the importance of local cultural ecosystems and Asia-facing relationships.

SPACEMRKT strongly believes cultural participation, adaptive reuse and creative access to space should be treated as essential civic infrastructure, embedded