

National Cultural Policy Submission

1470078

Public

Organisation

Showbiz Cinemas



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am writing as the owner / operator of Showbiz Cinemas in Ballarat (Victoria), which serves audiences across our region. Our cinema is more than an entertainment venue. It is a local cultural and civic space where people come together for film, school events, fundraisers, festivals, community screenings, seniors' sessions, and shared public experiences. National cultural policy should recognise that culture depends not only on creation, but on access. Cinemas are where screen stories become public culture. Without a viable cinema exhibition sector, Australian films and documentaries have fewer opportunities to be discovered, discussed and experienced collectively by audiences. In our community, the cinema supports local employment and social connection. It brings people into nearby restaurants, cafes and retail businesses and provides one of the most affordable regular cultural activities available to families, young people, older Australians and community groups. The next National Cultural Policy should recognise cinema exhibition as essential cultural and civic infrastructure. It should ensure cinemas are eligible for relevant cultural infrastructure, regional development, accessibility, sustainability, and night-time economy programs. We also ask government to recognise the emerging Digital Mark II challenge. Much of the projection and related digital equipment installed during the first digital cinema transition is now ageing. Nationally, ICA estimates that approximately 60% of the cinema projection fleet may require replacement or major refurbishment over the next four years, creating an estimated \$138 million renewal task. Without a planned national approach, some communities may lose access to local cinema or see service quality decline. A policy that supports Australian stories should also support the places where Australians can see those stories.