

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am a creative producer and community arts worker based on the Central Coast of New South Wales. My practice sits at the intersection of arts, community development and social justice, using creative processes to strengthen connection, amplify community voices and support social change.

Despite the Central Coast's size and cultural diversity, there are limited opportunities for artists and communities to participate in meaningful arts activity, and even fewer opportunities for Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) practice. This lack of infrastructure, funding and recognition restricts the ability of communities to engage in creative processes that build identity, belonging and wellbeing.

Racism and exclusion within arts and cultural institutions also remain persistent challenges across our region. Many culturally diverse artists and communities continue to face barriers to participation, representation and leadership. National cultural policy must actively address these inequities by supporting inclusive leadership, equitable access to funding, and community-led decision-making.

My practice is grounded in human rights, cultural democracy and collective authorship. I believe the arts should create space for communities to share their own stories, rather than simply producing work for audiences. Freedom of expression and artistic independence must remain central to Australia's cultural policy.

A key gap in the current National Cultural Policy: Revive framework is the lack of explicit recognition of Community Arts and Cultural Development. CACD is not a niche artform but a methodology used across sectors including health, education, justice, disaster management and climate adaptation. Yet only around 5–6% of national arts investment is explicitly attributed to CACD, significantly underrepresenting its reach as activity is dispersed across multiple funding streams and rarely measured consistently.

CACD strengthens social cohesion and belonging, improves wellbeing, builds local economies and creative workforce pathways, and supports civic participation. It also enables communities to respond collectively to complex challenges such as climate impacts, disasters and social fragmentation.

CACD directly advances the goals of the National Cultural Policy: Revive framework by supporting First Nations self-determination, elevating diverse stories, recognising community-based artists as essential workers, and shifting engagement from passive audiences to active participation. Its impact is particularly significant for priority communities including First Nations peoples, young people, culturally diverse communities, disabled communities and those living in regional or disaster-affected areas.

The new National Cultural Policy should formally recognise CACD as a core practice within Australia's cultural ecosystem and strengthen CACD practice nationally. This should include investing in workforce development, supporting long-term place-based programs, improving national data and evaluation systems, and embedding CACD across government portfolios including health, climate, disaster management and regional development. At a time when global crisis, economic instability, and social fragmentation, the arts plays an ever important role in building a brighter future.