

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Submission to the National Cultural Policy Consultation

Rebalancing Australian Cultural Policy

I am an Australian artist writing to argue that national cultural policy has become overly narrow in its priorities, with excessive institutional focus on decolonisation frameworks and identity-based curation at the expense of broader artistic diversity, experimentation, and international engagement.

While Indigenous art is an important part of Australia's cultural landscape and should continue to be supported, it should not function as the dominant framing device for Australian cultural identity or funding allocation across the entire sector.

The Australian contemporary art market is fragile, with declining commercial confidence, reduced collector engagement, and increasing difficulty for artists to sustain viable careers.

International assumptions about demand for Indigenous Australian art require closer scrutiny. Sotheby's recent Indigenous art auction in New York reportedly saw only around 25% of works sold, with many achieving results at the low end of estimates. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art's renovated Michael C. Rockefeller Wing (approximately 35,000 square feet), only 10 square feet is dedicated to Indigenous Australian work. These examples indicate a gap between institutional narratives and actual market and institutional allocation outcomes.

Cultural policy should prioritise:

Artistic excellence and innovation across all practices

Plurality of ideas and reduced ideological gatekeeping

Stronger support for international engagement beyond a single curatorial framework

Market sustainability and collector development

Balanced representation of all Australian artistic communities

Australia's cultural strength depends on diversity of artistic production rather than concentration around a single interpretive lens. The trend of decolonisation is also losing momentum globally, and Australian policy should reflect a more plural and internationally aligned cultural direction.

Australia has the opportunity to build a more confident, outward-looking cultural sector grounded in artistic freedom, excellence, and long-term sustainability.