

National Cultural Policy Submission

1470200

Public and anonymous

Individual

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am a practicing visual artist based in [REDACTED] with over 20 years of experience in studio practice and exhibition. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I have presented numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout my career and submit this in a personal capacity, drawing on my lived experience as a mid-career artist.

Australia's next National Cultural Policy must move beyond symbolically placing artists at its centre and instead create the material conditions that make a creative life genuinely sustainable. I write in response to Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist and Pillar 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure.

The most significant barrier I and many of my peers face is financial insecurity. Despite substantial investment in training - including postgraduate qualifications - many artists cannot sustain their practice. Rising costs, unpredictable income, and short-term funding cycles force talented artists out of practice entirely. If artists are truly considered central, the policy must reflect that through longer-term grants and living stipends that provide real stability between projects.

Affordable workspace is also critically lacking. In metropolitan areas where cultural infrastructure is concentrated, studio costs have become prohibitive. The loss of artist-run and adaptive-reuse spaces has had a direct impact on what artists can make and how communities engage with culture. Subsidised studios, protection of existing artist-run facilities, and adaptive reuse of vacant buildings would make a meaningful difference.

Current funding structures also tend to favour commercially viable, output-focused work. This disadvantages artists whose practice is slow, process-led, experimental, or community-engaged - often the most culturally significant work being made. Grant processes must be reformed to value this work and to reduce the administrative burden that disproportionately affects neurodivergent artists, disabled artists, and those balancing caregiving or multiple jobs.

Finally, regional arts communities must remain a genuine priority. Regional artists and organisations contribute enormously to Australia's cultural life but consistently face reduced access to funding, networks, and infrastructure. Continued investment in regional galleries, residencies, artist-run initiatives, and creative hubs is essential to ensuring cultural participation is not confined to major cities.

My Recommendations:

Introduce longer-term grants and living stipends for practicing artists, particularly mid-career and postgraduate-qualified artists.

Fund affordable studio infrastructure through subsidised spaces and adaptive reuse of vacant buildings.

Reform grant application processes to support process-based practice and improve accessibility.

Maintain and expand investment in regional arts infrastructure and organisations.

Australia's cultural future depends on creating conditions where artists can afford to live, work, and contribute meaningfully over time. I urge the government to ensure this policy delivers structural and financial change, not only aspiration.