This submission is made in a personal capacity, as Director of The Gist: Strategy and Engagement. The views expressed in this submission are the author's own and do not represent the position of any current or former employer or other institution with which the author is or has been affiliated. References to Screen Currency 2026 draw only on published findings.

The Government's consultation on the next iteration of Cultural Policy is welcome and timely.

Revive: A Place for Every Story, a Story for Every Place addressed a long-standing gap in federal cultural policy in Australia, delivered at a time when the sector was reeling after pandemic lockdowns and grappling with changes in audience behaviour, lost revenue and a major skills crisis.

The challenge for this next iteration of Cultural Policy is to go beyond reviving the sector and to move towards finding new ambitions, models and forms of cultural infrastructure that can address increasingly evident structural and systemic challenges.

This submission is drawn from:

- research **into the audience trends and industry dynamics** shaping Australia's screen and games industries, which I designed and directed through The Gist for Screen Australia's Screen Currency 2026 (published August 2026).
- my former role as Executive Director of Development and Partnerships at **Creative Australia** (2021-2024), developing **new sector development interventions and partnership models** as part of the leadership team implementing key actions in last National Cultural Policy.
- collaborations with range of local and global creative industries organisations for The Gist: Strategy and Engagement including supporting **strategy development, communications, equity and inclusion** programs and **private investment models** and masterclasses on **public impact** in public broadcasting for the European Broadcasting Union.
- previous industry roles including:
    - Head of Strategy and Acting CEO at federal **creative sector training and higher-education provider AFTRS** (2016-2019);
    - Director of Strategy and Communications at **Screen Australia** (2013-2016), responsible for research, policy, sector development and communications);
    - Almost a decade in policy, research and community engagement at multicultural broadcaster **SBS**;
- multiple sector roles such as facilitator of Screen Australia's **Gender Matters Taskforce**, Board member of **Diversity Arts Australia**;
- an applied **Doctorate of Cultural Research** on inclusive media policy and practice; and
- ongoing engagement with theory, practice and critical discourse around culture, including a recent UCL **Transforming Government through Innovation and Public Purpose** course.

The **10 ideas** outlined in this submission respond to the request for input to address sector challenges and are drawn from the insights generated from this experience.

The ideas – and the topline proposed actions under each – encourage an active role for policy in supporting **new models** and **enabling conditions** for creativity and cultural engagement.

I hope they help.

Framing the challenges

We know that cultural participation helps people to live **whole, connected lives, enriches and empowers communities** and **benefits Australia's economy** and our **place in the world**.

Arts and screen **audiences recognise of the value** of arts and culture. **84% of Australians** acknowledge the positive impacts of arts and creativity.[1] Screen Currency found that 84% also agree it is **important that Australians have access** to locally produced film and TV. The research found that audiences ascribe **unique value** to local content – including cultural resonance and relatability, authenticity, cultural representation and preservation, shared understanding and social impact.[2]

Culture is now recognised as a **public good**, non-rivalrous and non-excludable, a resource which belongs to us all.[3] This does not mean it does not have commercial value. While the cultural impact and **commercial outcomes** of culture are sometimes in **tension**, they are always in **relationship**.

We need to move on from exhausted (and exhausting) debates about whether the value of culture should be understood as economic or social. Participation and engagement with culture offers both. **Global cultural policy** is increasingly recognising the value of arts and culture in a range of domains, from **health and wellbeing** and **socially cohesive** societies to the **productivity** benefits of creative **innovation** and new applications of digital technologies.

Many of these benefits flow out of the **processes of creation** and **engagement** rather than from the cultural products themselves. We need to focus not only on outputs, but also on processes.

Of course, you rarely get **great social outcomes** without **great art**. It takes **creative vision, talent** and **skills** to generate the kind of engagement and meaning that captures a zeitgeist or creates a legacy. However, this is not the end of the story. It is the **making, responding, sharing, experiencing, discussing** and **critiquing** of arts and culture that generate **meaning, connection** and **social change**, rather than emanating directly from the stories, objects or intellectual property.

In the UK, Arts Council England had enshrined this understanding in their *Let's Create* strategy[4] leaning into **creative and cultural participation**, recently replaced by a new strategic framework requiring that its investment "support excellence", "deliver for everybody" and "reach everywhere"; while creative industries have long been central to **industrial policy**; in Canada – particularly in the current geo-political context – cultural policy is framed as an issue of **cultural sovereignty;** in Europe, the focus is on **artistic freedom, cultural heritage** and **cultural democracy** – promoting democratic participation.

In all these contexts, however they are framed, the individual, community and national benefits of cultural creation and engagement are **vulnerable to disruptions**. **Globalisation and digitisation** have been double-edged: enabling new forms of **cultural exchange, increased access** and **greater choice**; but also creating **personalised,** increasingly **transactional** and **polarised** experiences of culture.

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[1] Creative Australia, 2023, *Creating Value Results of the National Arts Participation Survey.* https://creative.gov.au/sites/creative-australia/files/documents/2025-04/National-Arts-Participation-Survey-results-2022_Executive-Summary.pdf

[2] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Audience Insights,* based on a weighted, nationally representative survey of 2,404 Australians by 89 Degrees East. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/audience/

[3] UNESCO, 2024. *"Acting for the recognition of culture as a global public good and a standalone goal*

[4] Changes were recommended by the Hodge Review. https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2026-03-26/debates/26032664000020/HodgeReviewOfArtsCouncilEnglandGovernmentResponse; Arts Council England, Our Strategic Framework https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-strategy/our-strategic-framework

In the new landscape, **choice is abundant,** if sometimes expensive, and **attention is scarce**. **Shared experience** is becoming rarer still.

Cost (amidst cost-of-living pressures) and **competition** (from seemingly endless libraries of global options) are impacting on audience behaviours. New **behavioural defaults** are being generated and entrenched as 'option overwhelm' is increasingly managed by the interfaces and affordances of **social** and **digital platforms** (from Spotify to Amazon and Netflix). This is particularly evident in engagement with screen content, where the main drivers of viewing choices have become **algorithm-based**[5] and habits are influenced by **interface design**[6] whereby "...habitual choice is the norm from which deliberative, conscious and reflective choice departs."[7]

Discoverability is a major issue for local screen, music and literature, as local culture is rarely surfaced to audiences by the algorithms and defaults embedded in **now-ubiquitous global digital platforms**. Our habits are no longer oriented to engagement with Australian culture.

Screen Australia's recent *Screen Currency* industry study found that **market concentration** in **distribution pathways** has meant that creation and production businesses are competing for audience access via **fewer gatekeepers**, who have accumulated unique **dealmaking power**. Global platforms are increasingly **controlling IP, audience access, data and distribution scale**, leaving Australian businesses with reduced ability to **retain their own creative IP, negotiate downstream value, or access audience data**. This is challenging for the **sustainability** of creative screen businesses, particularly the **smaller businesses** involved in generating original IP.[8]

For the traditional and performing arts, the ubiquity and low thresholds for participation in forms of digital culture globally have contributed to a **crisis in ticket sales and subscriptions**, compounding **issues of relevance** in a sector that has struggled to respond to the cultural needs of an increasingly diverse set of audiences.

These are **global challenges**; they are not unique to Australia.

> "We are playing a losing hand, taking us deeper into the hole with each passing fiscal. Arguments around the social good of the finer arts have faltered in the face of increasing diversity, increasing utilitarianism, and the increased purchase of popular forms over the public imagination. Cheaper digital formats distribute commercial content at scales and conveniences the likes of which very few non-profits can match. With the collapse of our arts education system and the perennial resupply of older ticket-buyers set to run dry, a very different society replaces the one we (our insufficiently diverse, proscenium-loving sector) specialize in engaging."[9]
>
> **David Maggs, Metcalf Fellow on Arts and Society**

[5] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Audience Insights,* based on a weighted, nationally representative survey of 2,404 Australians by 89 Degrees East. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/audience/
[6] Johnson, Lobato and Scarlata (2025) "Default viewing: Reconceptualising choice and habit in television audience research," *Media Culture and Society.* Vol. 47(5) 893–909, p.902
[7] Johnson et al (2025) *ibid*
[8] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Industry Insights,* based on a survey of Australian screen and games businesses (765 usable responses) and 32 in-depth industry stakeholder interviews, conducted and analysed by McAtamney & Advisors. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/industry/
[9] David Maggs, *Art and the World After This.* metcalffoundation.com/publication/art-and-the-world-after-this/ https://metcalffoundation.com/publication/art-and-the-world-after-this/ p.25

Disruptions and barriers summary

Some of the key challenges facing Australia's creative cultural ecology include:

- **Cost** (for audiences: cost of living pressures; for producers: increasing costs of production)
- **Competition** (among audiences - for attention; among creators - for access to finance)
- **Discoverability** and defaults (driven by mass algorithm-led consumption patterns)
- **Market concentration** (among distributors and gatekeepers)
- **Declining revenue** (loss of traditional pathways and long-tail revenue streams)
- **Loss of control over IP** (particularly in deals with global digital platforms)
- **Sustainability barriers** (reduced revenue streams and pathways)
- **Career / workforce challenges** (including workforce retention)
- **Ongoing barriers** for talent from underrepresented communities

A note on Value

The value of culture and creativity is notoriously hard to measure. 'Culture' itself refers to **products** and **processes, economic drivers** and **enablers**, as well as modes of **participation** and **engagement** that address beliefs, customs and ideas. Some of culture's greatest power lies in **intangibles** – affect, identity, connection, symbolic value, aesthetic quality and legacy. Of course, creative industries are just that: **industries** – with value chains, employees, products, revenues, and exports – that are often aggregated into estimates of **contributions to the economy.** These estimates often leave out what is most unique and important about cultural engagement.

At the end of all the activity around creative production, the hope is that **someone watches, engages or plays,** and **feels something.** That kind of **emotional engagement** or affect can deliver a host of social and cultural benefits, including **affirmation of identity, greater empathy for** and **connection to others, a shared resource for understanding** and **for communicating complex ideas, improved wellbeing, social and civic action, national confidence and belonging**. When value is poorly understood, it leaves the vital but increasingly fragile public benefits of cultural engagement more precarious.

> Arts and culture…are the foundations for reimagining alternative futures, fostering civic identity, and mobilising collective action. Yet they remain underutilised and undervalued in economic policy. Arts and culture are not peripheral to economic development but essential to both stimulating and directing economic growth toward more creative, inclusive and sustainable societies and generating dynamic spillovers across the economy and society.
> This stems in part from the collaborative nature of creative processes that engage a range of professions as well as the social value that cultural engagement creates for individuals and communities. Despite these well-documented benefits, arts and culture remain undervalued by conventional evaluation methods, often reduced to their contribution to GDP rather than their ability to shape an economy. As a result, cultural funding is frequently the first to be cut during austerity – precisely when society most needs a renewed sense of purpose and imagination.[10]

Over decades of researching, defining and advocating for the public value of many form of culture, I have translated between theory – drawing on a range of disciplines from audience theory to cultural studies to economics – and practice, in sector development programs and partnerships with purpose at their core. In recent years, this work has become ever more salient as the call for more holistic models of value and increasing exchange between disciplines in attempts to address systemic and structural challenges have led to the development of new models and practical possibilities.

[10] Mariana Mazzucato (2025) *The Public Value of Arts and Culture* Discussion Paper

Through The Gist, I developed the value framework published as part of Screen Australia's Screen Currency 2026 research, for understanding how screen and games value is created and realised – from what audiences value and how they engage, through to industry activity, economic impact and spillovers, and global influence.

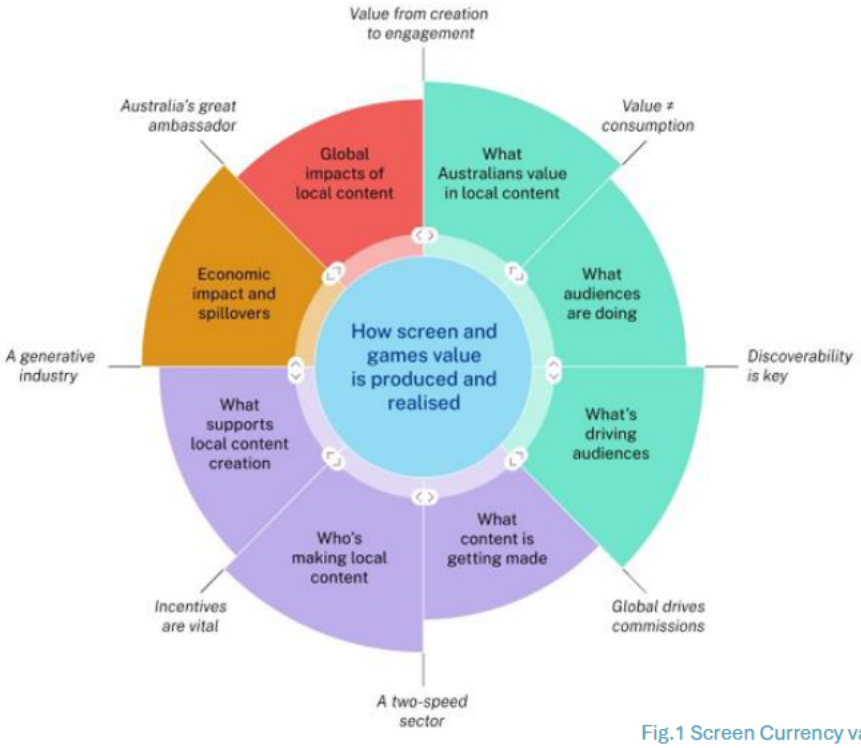


Fig.1 Screen Currency value framework
Source: developed by The Gist for Screen Currency.

This framework distils the **'beneficiaries framework'** exploring *who* benefits from arts and culture.

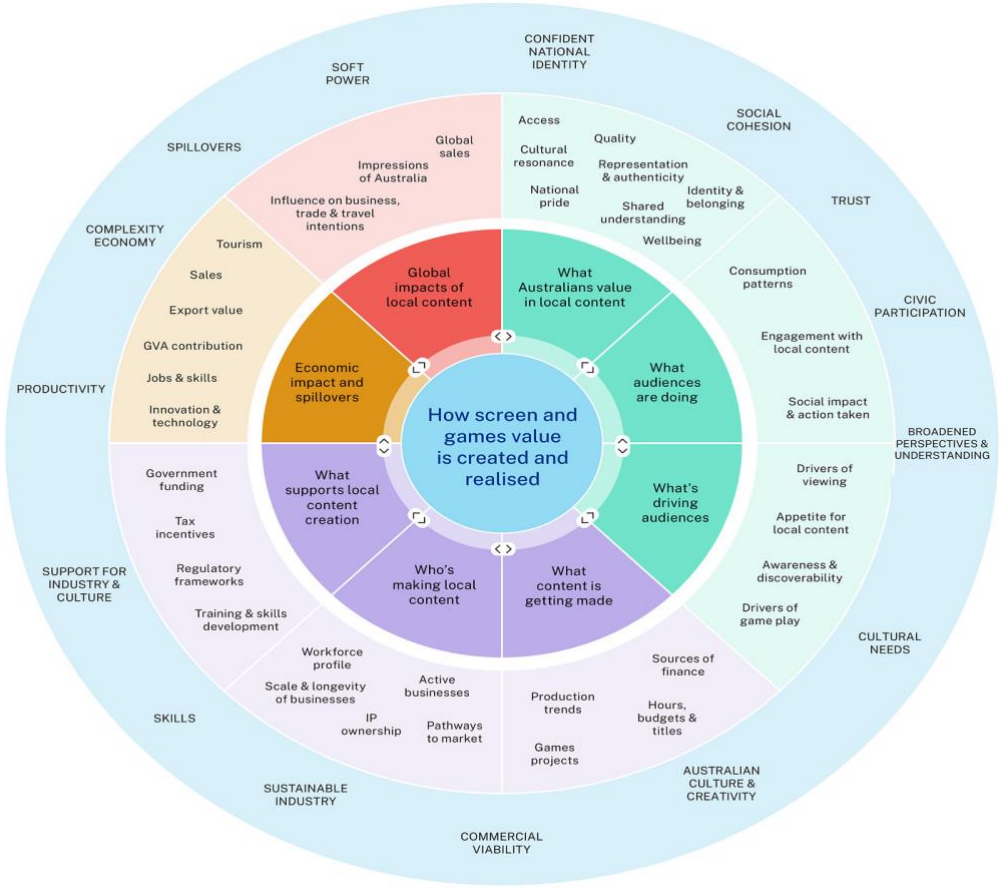
Individuals	Communities	Industry	Economy	Nation
Entertainment	Social connection	IP	GVA contribution	Cultural sovereignty
Relaxation	Shared understanding	Innovation in	Complexity Economy	Inclusion+ connection
Relatability	Mutual engagement	production/ approach	Technology Innovation	National pride
Authenticity	Discussion+ exchange	Career progression	Employment	Diversified industries
Diversity	Social action	New models +	Skilled workforce	Australian creativity
Relevance	Social change	partners	Skills transfer	Cultural affinity
Learning + information	Digital literacy	Business models	Exports	Soft Power
Emotional wellbeing	Education outcomes	Volume of production	Tourism Impacts	Confident national
Quality	Resources	Work opportunities	Regional spend	identities
Cultural Resonance	Representation	Community support	Productivity –	Social cohesion
Identity	Pride	Recognition	empowerment +	Optimism
Skills		Talent development	advances	Trust

Fig 2: Beneficiaries of value framework. Source: The Gist.

These groupings are not discrete categories – an individual may benefit in any/ all of these ways – and they do not accrue universally or evenly to all. Differing cultural perspectives – including First Nations worldviews – should be considered in impact models. Nor is it an exhaustive list. However, thinking about *who* benefits and *how* offers a useful 'way in' to defining value.[11]

[11] Creative Australia (2019) 'Valuing the Arts: Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand' p.12

The published Screen Currency 2026 Value Framework shows how these elements interact – building in indicators drawn from the Screen Currency findings and mapped onto economic and social spillovers and outcomes:



Source: Developed by The Gist for Screen Currency.

Fig 3: Screen Currency 2026 Value Framework
Source: Screen Australia (2026) Screen Currency 2026: Insights Overview, Figure 1. Developed by The Gist for Screen Currency

Cultural Policy Opportunities

In the context of these challenges, the role required of government becomes not just to address ongoing market failure but to step into **proactive, mission-oriented market shaping**.[12] According to economist Mariana Mazzucato, the role of government should be to **align markets with public purpose**.[13] Policy, funding and regulatory levers should be built around core principles and ambitious goals that address problems, support public goods and benefit communities.

Policy makers must – as ever – have an eye to **who benefits** from interventions, with critical reflection on **how they benefit**. **Consumer choice**, for example, is a benefit, but it does not necessarily deliver on public goods. In fact, choice is now compounding issues for local industry. Ironically, in an era of plenty, some **highly valued forms of local content**, such as Australian children's TV or local independent music, are **harder to create sustainably** and **harder to find.**

We cannot wind back the clock on **audience expectations**. We must, however, recognise the new **cultural needs and vulnerabilities** emerging in a changed landscape, and ensure that our cultural policy is responsive to them.

When publics are solely addressed as **consumers, attention becomes commoditised,** engendering **cynicism** and **disempowerment**. When they are addressed as engaged **citizens**, **collaborators and co-investors** in culture through structures that support **shared, collective benefit,** the **trust and cohesion** required to live in ongoing mutual relationship is made stronger.

In screen, the recent *Screen Currency* research has found that while screen audiences are fragmenting, the **cultural benefits** of screen engagement **remain social** – translating into social action. The research found that **71% of Australian audiences take some form of action –** discussing it (43%), researching a topic further (36%), recommending it (27%) or even changing their behaviour (22%) – after watching local screen content.[14]

Cultural policy should incentivise all parts of the ecosystem towards the **principles, processes** and **outcomes that matter.** A healthy ecosystem relies on diversity and connectivity and the ability to adapt as well as to preserve what matters.

> "Resilient ecosystems in nature resist threats and adapt to new conditions. They thrive because they have high connectivity and high diversity."[15]
> – **Globally Respected Ecologist** and **University of Melbourne Vice Chancellor Professor Emma Johnston**

We need to think carefully about **creating conditions** for **mutuality**; for **creative ambition**; for **experimentation** and **skilful execution**; and for **inclusive, expansive** realisations of Australia's cultural life. To do this requires **systems-level approaches** beyond existing organisational and funding structures. It may require a **reorientation** away from some of the sacred cows of Australian screen and arts funding.

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[12] Mariana Mazzucato 2025 Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose *"The Public Value of Arts and Culture: Investing in Arts and Culture to Reimagine Economic Growth in the 21st Century"* https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/sites/bartlett/files/2026-02/Public%20Value%20of%20Arts%20and%20Culture.pdf

[13] Kattel, R., Mazzucato, M., Ryan-Collins, J., Sharpe, S. (2018), 'The economics of change: Policy appraisal for missions, market shaping and public', IIPP Working Paper, no. 2018-06. Available online at https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/public-purpose/wp2018-06

[14] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Audience Insights,* based on a weighted, nationally representative survey of 2,404 Australians by 89 Degrees East. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/audience/

[15] https://futurecampus.com.au/2026/01/22/emma-johnstons-plan-for-melbourne/

The sector currently faces a number of ongoing disruptions that have created **structural problems** which require **new thinking, new collaboration and new approaches**, rather than a doubling down on existing models. Government should not imagine it can control the dynamics of creation, but it has a vital role in helping **generate the conditions for creativity, collaboration** and **connection**.

The following policy recommendations and insights support the conditions for a **thriving creative ecosystem** aligned with the pillars of the National Cultural Policy, drawn from research insights, programs and new models for the sector developed over a range of vantage points on Australian cultural and creative sectors.

As systems are complex, *"you never just do one thing"* with an intervention: actions often interact to produce results that cannot be comprehended by linear models, which may include unintended (negative or positive) consequences. One way to deal with to the challenge this creates for policy is to apply multiple reinforcing actions:

> "Effective action is often possible by employing multiple policies that constrain and work with the dynamics of the system. The fact that when we are dealing with a system *"we can never do merely one thing"* means not only that behaviour rarely has only one effect, but, more importantly here, that in order to produce a desired change, the actor must do several things....where a social reform that relies on either incentives or regulation fails, one that utilizes both may succeed"[16]

10 ideas for the next National Cultural Policy

- **Pillar 1 – First Nations First**
  - **Idea 1:** First Nations talent development
- **Pillar 2 – A Place for Every Story**
  - **Idea 2**: Inclusive pathways + sector standards
  - **Idea 3:** Regional creative partnerships
- **Pillar 3 – the Centrality of the Artist**
  - **Idea 4:** IP protections
  - **Idea 5:** Workforce skills needs
- **Pillar 4 – Strong Cultural Infrastructure**
  - **Idea 6:** Impact investing
  - **Idea 7:** Challenge briefs
  - **Idea 8:** Creative cooperatives
- **Pillar 5 – Finding the Audience**
  - **Idea 9:** Discoverability
  - **Idea 10:** Shared data

Rather than large or heroic new investments, the ideas above mainly emphasise **new models for collaboration** and **partnership**, helping generate **greater connectivity** across the cultural ecosystem, thus building its **resilience**.

While they have been presented as discrete proposals under the National Cultural Policy pillars, the thinking and approaches that underpin them may be drawn on and applied to other areas of priority. Idea 7: Challenge briefs, for example, could be used to find innovate solutions to a range of these areas of focus.

If useful, I would be happy to discuss further iterations of these ideas as part of the engagement through the policy development process.

[16] R. Jervis (1998) *Complexity and the Analysis of Political & Social Life* Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 112, No. 4 p. 592

Idea 1: First Nations talent development

The problem

Revive established new governance structures and investments to support First Nations self-determination including Creative Australia's First Nations Board.

First Nations self-determination requires First Nations leadership and participation, supported by a pipeline of First Nations talent. Building and maintaining strategies for First Nations talent development requires long-term, coordinated and adequately -resourced approaches centred on the needs and aspirations of First Nations creative practitioners and their communities.

Key themes from the Creative Australia's *First Nations First* community consultation included:

- Support for career development, mentoring and leadership for emerging artists and young people; and
- Workforce capacity development and career pathways, including
    - training in business skills, digital skills and governance
    - targeted support for emerging artists that is culturally safe
    - more opportunities to come together, network and collaborate nationally and internationally.[17]

Work undertaken in the screen sector, informed by Screen Australia's (then) Indigenous department strategy *'The Next 25 Years'* (2019) identified the need for sector collaboration to improve career pathways for First Nations talent. The strategy stated:

> "Indigenous filmmakers are currently challenged by a fragmentation of approach, funding and strategy across multiple government and private agencies. Overlaps and gaps can confuse key talent and cause organisations to miss opportunities.
>
> Screen Australia's Indigenous Department will formalise a national agreement between the department, all state and territory funding agencies, NITV, ABC Indigenous, AFTRS, industry guilds and Screen Producers Australia (SPA). The agreement will outline a commitment to collaboratively create and fund vital professional development opportunities for Indigenous writers, producers and directors, via clear career pathways, in all phases of their careers.
>
> The Indigenous Department acknowledges that state and territory agencies, the guilds and SPA have varied funding priorities and remits, and already provide valuable professional development initiatives to Indigenous screen practitioners."[18]
>
> **The Next 25 years: Screen Australia Indigenous Department Strategy (2019)**

> "It takes money, and it takes commitment over years. You have to have an aspiration for excellence at the highest level. It can't just be box ticking. It has to be bold, audacious and risk-taking. A key element of the success of the Indigenous program was that there was real autonomy in how the money was spent."
>
> **Darren Dale, of Blackfella Films, speaking at 'Diversity: Building a Platform for Change' AFTRS 2016**

[17] Creative Australia 2024, First Nations First – What We Heard: A summary of community consultation findings
[18] Screen Australia (2019) *The Next 25 years: Screen Australia Indigenous Department Strategy.* https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/The-Next-25-Years.pdf?v=1775615759

Opportunities for Cultural Policy

Drawing on my experience working with First Nations screen practitioners, sector leaders and agencies, potential priorities for better coordination include:

Recruiting First Nations practitioners into sector

- Recruit into sector with pathways from transferrable skills.
  Develop lateral pathways for First Nations practitioners to enter the sector transferring existing skills applicable to screen practice, eg, lawyers, accountants, writers, performing arts, other creatives and tech roles.

Empowering practitioners to 'learn by doing'

- Meaningful attachments with two-way upskilling prior to + during placements.
  Broker relevant placements for First Nations practitioners through placements, in which production companies / agencies are given pre-placement support on cultural safety and good practice. Regular contact points throughout placements and effective debriefs. Build to 'next steps' post opportunity.

Backing talent

- Track + profile talent – look for next opportunities.
  Share intel with each other and throughout sector about First Nations creative talent. Work collaboratively to generate new opportunities for them, assist creatives to generate 'calling cards' for their work and to build their public and sector profiles.

Collaborating for Career progression

- Share calendars – build to opportunities.
  Screen agencies and other organisations to publicise opportunities with enough lead time to strengthen potential candidates access, readiness + skill levels.

Targeting opportunities

- Sector development fund for prof development activities.
  Screen agencies to support businesses + organisations with targeted funds for activities to benefit First Nations careers.

Generating First Nations Creative IP

- Writers' rooms + ideas hot-houses to develop First Nations' IP.
  Build new creative IP through targeted development opportunities in safe and productive collaborative environments. Work to production/ market outcomes.

Promoting best practice

- Shared resources on language and best practice protocols.
  Develop sector-wide agreement on best practice (around, eg, collaboration, credits and cultural safety), career stages (e.g. definitions of 'emerging' / 'mid-career') and language.

Building up First Nations-led companies

- Business skills development + business mentoring – long horizon.
  Training and business mentorships to strengthen the screen business skills of First Nations practitioners. Go beyond creative slates with capability building around, e.g. financing and rights management. Take a long-term view of support (e.g. 2 years+ rather than single year support).

The Gist/ AFTRS Inclusive Pathways for Storytelling Talent[19] included insights and perspectives from First Nations sector leaders on the development of First Nations screen talent.

The development of First Nations creative practitioners, from an extremely low base in the 1970s to global success, was cited by many as an exemplary model for building up new talent into the sector. Many contemporary high-profile and successful practitioners came through tailored programs that centred craft skills and connections into professional practice.

> "The AFC Indigenous Unit ran a call out for people, even those with no experience, and asked them to write up an idea for a short film for the short film initiative. Sometimes we needed to guide people through putting in an application. They were short-listed based on the idea, then we met them, and ran workshops involving writers and directors. Mentors were offered for 1:1 relationships. We ran plenaries and gave notes throughout. We had to develop craft skills: script writing, script layout, tone, dialogue. It was an intensive commitment, especially as many didn't live in Sydney. We made 20 short films out of initial workshops. It involved filmmakers – we brought in cinematographers, actors and directors. You have to develop more projects than you have funding for as some inevitably fall through. You then fully fund the projects through to production. You need to have broadcast outcomes, or festival selection. Long Black Features development had international mentors. We had strong support within the industry and from the agencies."
>
> **Sally Riley former ABC Head of Scripted Content, and AFC**

Potential Actions: First Nations talent development

- Led by Creative Australia's First Nations Board and the First Nations screen leadership – including across Screen Australia's First Nations department, all Indigenous state and territory leads as well as SBS, NITV, AFTRS and NIDA – determine talent development priorities to take forward
- Embed and resource First Nations-relevant talent development programs and principles in the next iteration of National Cultural Policy
- Resource identified opportunities to build better coordination efforts across the sector

[19] AFTRS/ The Gist (2016) *Inclusive Pathways for Storytelling Talent*. https://diversityarts.org.au/app/uploads/Inclusive-Pathways-Frame-for-Screen-Storytelling-Talent.pdf

New insights: Australian storytelling and social cohesion

Stories have **unique power**. Representations of Australian life in cultural expression have a powerful impact on how we **understand ourselves and others** in our communities.

Screen Currency found Australian audiences place **value on authenticity: real characters, settings, and stories that reflect everyday Australian life in all its diversity**. 77% of Australians say well-made screen content makes them **feel proud to be Australian**.[20] Audiences describe content as feeling authentically 'Australian' when it is grounded in **lived experience and recognisable places, people and social interactions.**[21]

Importantly, **contemporary Australian audiences are comfortable with diverse and multiple representations of Australia** that reflect more complex and **evolving national identities**, rather than old-fashioned jingoism and 'blokes in the bush'. 'Australianness' is understood as evolving and contested, as **audiences are open to stories that reflect diverse contemporary life** alongside historical narratives. The research found that, while film and TV are increasingly reflecting more of Australia's communities on screen, there are calls for a **wider range of experiences** are reflected on screen, rather than relying on singular or token representations.

Around two-thirds of Australians agree local screen stories **support feelings of belonging and connectedness,** and/or make them **think about their place and identity** as an Australian. This form of **cultural exchange and learning** tends to flow in multiple directions. First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse audiences are more likely to report watching higher levels of Australian content, and almost 7 in 10 Australians agree local screen content helps new migrants learn about Australian culture and everyday life – with agreement higher among CALD respondents.[22]

Australian screen content can **foster dialogue around important social issues**, helping audiences connect to different perspectives and to each other. **Issues covered** in dramas like *Heartbreak High* can build understanding of the experiences of diverse young people facing racism in Western Sydney, whereas feature *The Dry* explored tensions in regional communities impacted by drought, violence and gambling. Screen stories provide **shared reference points** to help navigate complex issues with **greater mutual understanding**. While viewing may be increasingly individual, its **outcomes are social, produced collectively.** Analysis of more than 5,600 online reviews and video responses to Australian screen content revealed how programs play a social role: crystalising an issue, **educating the community, normalising representation** or **inspiring action**.[23]

These findings are mirrored in the broader arts ecology, **cultural participation is recognised for its role in building social connection and social cohesion** – Creative Australia National Arts Participation Survey regularly finds that **more than 70% of Australians** agree that **cultural and creative experiences help audiences to understand perspectives that are different from their own**.[24]

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[20] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Audience Insights*, based on a nationally weighted survey of Australian screen audiences n= 2,404, analysed by 89 Degrees East. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/audience/

[21] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Audience Insights*, based on online audience forums and First Nations audiences focus groups analysed by 89 Degrees East. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/audience/

[22] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Audience Insights*, based on a nationally weighted survey of Australian screen audiences n= 2,404, analysed by 89 Degrees East. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/audience/

[23] Screen Australia 2026, Screen Currency 2026: Audience Insights, 'Online reviews and video responses' analysis by researchers from Swinburne University and QUT. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/audience/

[24] https://creative.gov.au/sites/creative-australia/files/documents/2025-04/National-Arts-Participation-Survey-results-2022_Spotlight-2.pdf

Idea 2: Inclusive pathways + sector standards

The problem

We need compelling stories drawn from lived experience. This requires building the contribution of talented creatives with a range of backgrounds and identities.

> Participants in Creative Australia's 2025 Arts Workforce Scoping study developed for DEWR's jobs and skills council Services and Creative Skills Australia called for **regional inclusion**, and new support for **accessible and equitable lifelong creative learning** – from the first day at school to the last day at work, including more visible career and training pathways.[25]

Creative Australia's 2026 *Towards Equity* report found there have been shifts in diversity among practising artists in Australia over the last decade but areas of inequality persist. The report notes that progress has been slight and is still undermined by substantial income inequality.[26]

Screen Australia's 2023 *Seeing Ourselves 2* also revealed that systemic barriers in the screen industry persist for people from historically excluded and under-represented groups and described a need to increase diversity among producers, commissioners, experienced mid-career key creatives and the leadership of screen organisations.[27]

> "There is an issue of privilege in the screen industry – the film industry requires periods in which people can survive without income. In many communities, expectation is that the next generations' income will support the broader family."[28]
> **S. Shakthidharan**

> "You have to go out to the world and say "we want to hear from you" and then facilitate it. You must support it. You can't just say "tell us a story." You have to train people and give them help."[29]
> **Debbie Lee**

Opportunities for Cultural Policy

The *AFTRS Inclusive Pathways Framework* (developed by The Gist in 2016)[30] identified good practice in programs for inclusive career development. The stages and commitments required involved:

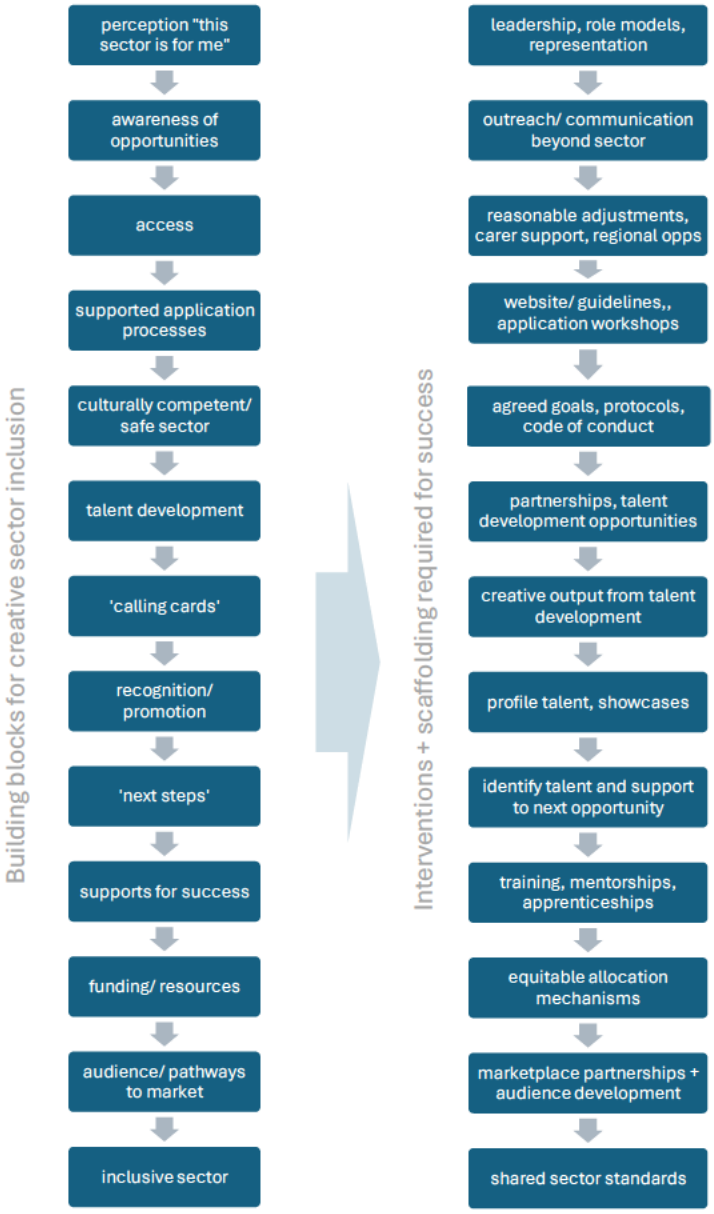
- Data tracking (of sector diversity)
- Consultation across target groups/with individuals on needs, aspirations and barriers
- Bespoke program development relevant to talent needs and context
- Starting in community spaces – for example by running workshops in target areas
- Ensuring participants are ready and supported, not just funnelled through
- Ensure that pathways are developed with clear next steps for talent progression
- Taking risks on creative outputs and ideas – avoiding the 'soft prejudice of low expectations'
- Partnerships and connections across industry, with shared ownership
- Mentorships and support from both peers and high level professionals

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[25] https://creative.gov.au/sites/creative-australia/files/documents/2025-05/Creative%20Workforce%20Scoping%20Study%20%E2%80%93%20Summary%20Report%20-%20Digital_0.pdf
[26] Creative Australia (2026) *Towards Equity: Creative Australia's diversity data report https://www.creative.gov.au/research/towards-equity-2-creative-australia-diversity-data-report*
[27] Screen Australia (2023) *Seeing Ourselves 2* https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/insights-and-trends/industry-reports/seeing-ourselves-2/
[28] quoted in AFTRS/ The Gist (2016) *Inclusive Pathways for Storytelling Talent.*
[29] quoted in AFTRS/ The Gist (2016) *ibid*
[30] AFTRS/ The Gist (2016) *Inclusive Pathways for Storytelling Talent.*

- Using past participants as mentors to support cohorts
- Longer term nurturing, placements and attachments, including requirement for credits
- Developing production outcomes
- Leveraging industry relationships to create new opportunities for strong talent
- Tying into market needs – consult with industry about gaps and skills needs
- Prioritising job outcomes
- Encouraging steps into own independent production and practice
- Evaluation and feedback from partners and participants
- Awareness of, and connections between, initiatives and opportunities across the industry
- An overarching structure to oversee and monitor progress

Some of the building blocks and 'scaffolding' required for inclusive pathways developed by The Gist are summarised in the diagram below:



Source: The Gist 2020 Creative Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategy

Potential Actions: Inclusive pathways + sector standards

- Build commonly agreed principles for inclusive practice into sector-wide 'minimum threshold' standards to reduce the burden of self-advocacy on individual creative practitioners from underrepresented communities
- Embed in Cultural Policy a commitment to a sector framework for collaborative equity and inclusion standards and reasonable adjustments across the sector as a baseline for good practice
- Build people-centred inclusive pathways by designing programs that incentivise responsive collaboration between organisations and agencies

Idea 3: Regional creative partnerships

The problem

Despite the profound benefits of cultural participation in regional areas, it is difficult to sustain, often relying on over-stretched and under-resourced organisations, workers and volunteers. Regional areas tend to have some 'hard' cultural infrastructure in the form of regional galleries etc., a certain level of digital infrastructure and multiple threads of 'soft' cultural infrastructure – from council funded programs, to higher education and TAFE training to events and opportunities through local businesses, venues and festivals, sometimes supported by local philanthropy. However these soft infrastructure threads – of people, programs and opportunities – are rarely woven together for sector development, shared resources or greater impact. Long-term outcomes for participants and communities tend to be frustrated by a lack of collaboration or ongoing support.

Opportunities for Cultural Policy

Regional creative partnerships offer place-based networks of creative practitioners and organisations, businesses and training organisations. They provide opportunities for grassroots participation and engagement and culturally relevant creative practice that represent the aspirations of a local community. Active and ongoing connections to a local communities engage audiences who feel as sense of relationship to the creative work and those that have made it.

Examples of elements of cultural infrastructure, organisations, businesses and events in my local area on the Central Coast (an area with a mixed socio-economic profile) include:

- **NAISDA**, (the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association)
- creative courses at Central Coast **TAFE**
- the Gosford **Regional Arts Gallery**
- the Gosford **Makers collective**
- the Funhaus Factory's **Gosford Arts Centre space** and **YAAS** – Young, Authentic and Social arts and culture pilot project for local 12-17 year olds (focusing on whom identify as LGBTQIA+, First Nations or living with disabilities)
- the **Youth Arts Warehouse** a music, art, and theatre venue run by Regional Youth Support Services to provide creative development programs for young people and emerging artists
- the Grove **Music Studios**
- **local venues** such as the Link + Pin live music venue in Woy Woy (which features local bands alongside touring musicians from Aussie rock legends to Japanese punk bands)
- **festivals** such as Words on the Waves literary festival and LGBTIQA+ festival Coastal Twist
- **volunteer-run events** like the Bouddi Arts Trail
- place-based **philanthropic organisations** such as the Bouddi Foundation for the Arts (established by theatre legend and local resident John Bell to help young people on the Coast with philanthropic grants to progress their creative aspirations)
- A new **screen and game production precinct**, Central Coast Studios, has been proposed, including potential collaboration with universities and tertiary providers to deliver programs, training students in real-time game engine technologies, virtual production and motion capture workflows.[31]

These are all successful (or have potential) in their own right, but most rely heavily on under-resourced and volunteer-staffed teams. They tend to be vulnerable to shocks and disruptions and to lack coordination and collaboration, missing opportunities for shared resources, audience development, skills pathways or economic spillovers that could build more dynamic and sustainable models.

[31] https://www.filmink.com.au/public-notice/central-coast-studios-reveals-260m-real-time-screen-motion-capture-and-esports-hub/

Successful local creative partnerships can strengthen and build networks and outcomes-oriented collaborations between a range of actors and organisations in the cultural and creative industries enabling co-operation, exchange and/or shared advocacy.

A skills-based model – based around creative innovation and sector development – interacts with local education and research organisations, and can foster strategic engagement with local government and economic development agencies, allowing for better integration of policy frameworks (including local/regional strategies) and as a vehicle to attract other sources of funding.

> The UK has had a hugely successful Creative Clusters program since 2018, embedded in the UK's Industrial Strategy. While this model operates at substantial scale (the initial £56m investment generated a total of £277m in co-investment) focused on creative industries and technological development, the model had lessons that can be applied in new thinking about regional investment.
>
> By March 2024, the UK program had created or safeguarded 5,563 jobs and enabled additional training for 5007 creative workers and supported 1055 industry-led innovation projects, leading to 466 start-ups, scale-ups and spin offs and 787 new tools products and services.[32]

An Australian version of the model could explore:

- location based regional and rural clusters
- industry innovation and R&D based partnerships
- relationships to R&D funding and state and Federal priorities e.g. health and wellbeing, skills funding
- relationships to industry policies and on building skills pathways
- links between creative industries and allied industries, to give scale, e.g. relationships to local tourism, fashion and design
- non-traditional organisation structures
- building on the foundations of the National Cultural Policy *Revive*

Creative industries peak bodies, Regional Arts Australia, relevant federal and state agencies, industry and economic development bodies, TAFEs, universities and urban planning experts could all be stakeholders and potential supporters of regional creative clusters, developed around the priorities of local communities.

Structures would require conditional funding with clear objectives managed through a primary or 'host' entity in the network, with inbuilt obligations and measures for resource-sharing and demonstrable sector- and community-benefit.

Once they have developed into more coherent networks through early stage support for new collaborative models, Regional Creative Partnerships could attract support through Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment (PLACE) an outcome of the Investment Dialogue for Australian Children (IDAC), a collaborative investment between government and major philanthropic foundations to address social inequality through the lens of childhood, families and place-based interventions.[33]

[32] AHRC/UKRI, Creative Industries Clusters: a new wave (programme figures to March 2024, subject to final reporting) https://www.ukri.org/blog/creative-industries-clusters-a-new-wave/

[33] https://www.placeaustralia.org/idac-partnerships-with-50-communities-will-change-lives-for-a-generation-of-australian-kids/

Potential Actions: Regional creative partnerships

- In collaboration with the Regional Arts Australia network, scope the development of Regional Creative Partnerships through identification of areas with existing creative infrastructure that would benefit from strengthened collaborative networks.
- Build collaboration across tiers of government through partnership with state government initiatives such as the Regional NSW Strategic Partnerships Program, under the plan for regional NSW arts, culture and creative industries *Heartland*.[34]
- Develop a responsive program to work with State Government and Local Government Areas, Regional Arts Australia's network and community organisations to co-design creative partnerships models based on the cultural needs and aspirations of regional communities.
- Pilot co-funded investments via 'host' organisation with funding agreements for experimental creative partnerships models with ambitious and locally relevant sector-building and skills-development outcomes.
- Build on Creative Australia's capability building programs and Emerging Regional Arts Leaders Scholarships for Regional Creative Partnerships cohorts to exchange knowledge and build skills.
- Support dedicated fundraising and partnerships capabilities within Regional Creative Partnerships via Creative Australia's private investment coaching support and the fundraising platform of the Australian Cultural Fund.
- Encourage models that build in agreed cultural participation, skills development and identifiable social and policy outcomes to explore and attract other forms of investment.

[34] https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2026-02/heartland-plan-for-regional-nsw-arts-culture-and-creative-industries-2026-2035.pdf

Idea 4: IP protections for creatives

The problem

While technical barriers for many forms of creative practice – from digital content creation to music production – have reduced, the pathways to sustainable creative practice are narrower than ever.

In creative industries, value tends to be crystalised in intellectual property (IP) rights. Screen Currency's industry study evidenced that much of the industry's original IP is generated by small production companies or independent games studios made up of highly skilled teams, but it is becoming more challenging for these companies to hold onto a share of the rights in their IP and therefore benefit long-term from its value.[35]

Market concentration, enabled by scale and access to capital, has left smaller production businesses vulnerable. Access to production finance has become, for smaller players, tied to what they have to give up: rights, access to audience feedback loops and ongoing revenue from their content. These concessions can mean that Australian production companies are less able to build their own capital and invest in their own businesses.

Artists as Workers, the most recent analysis of the working conditions of Australian professional artists published by Creative Australia found that artists' incomes are stubbornly low and, in areas such writing and composition, have been in decline.[36]

Creative Australia's First Nations First consultation emphasised the importance of First Nations control, cultural safety and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protection across the sector. [37]

The problems of recognising and compensating creative work are systemic and global, and are accelerating rapidly in the digital environment as markets concentrate around scale, function and increasing control of audiences and their data.

> "Giant companies corral an audience, locking them in through "digital rights management" (which locks all the media you buy to a platform controlled by the seller), or by subscription fees, or through exclusive deals with venues or radio stations, or by buying out any company that tries to compete with them, or by starving these upstart competitors by selling at a loss whenever a new company starts up, so they can't gain purchase.
>
> As a creative worker, you need to access those locked-in audiences—you need to stream your music on Spotify and/or YouTube; you need to tour in LiveNation venues and sell your tickets through TicketMaster (TicketMaster and LiveNation are both the same company!); you need airplay on IHeartRadio (which used to be ClearChannel), or you need access to the retail channels controlled by three record labels, or the two cinematic exhibitors who are controlled by four studios, or the four publishers, or the sole independent book distributor.
>
> These companies know that you need access to the audiences they've trapped inside their walled gardens, and they treat you accordingly. They subject you to one-sided contracting terms, locking you in

[35] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Industry Insights,* prepared by McAtamney + Advisors. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/industry/

[36] Creative Australia, David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya (2024) *Artists as Workers: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia* https://creative.gov.au/research/artists-workers-economic-study-professional-artists-australia

[37] Creative Australia 2024, First Nations First – What We Heard: A summary of community consultation findings

to using their suppliers at inflated rates, forcing you to sign over rights that someone else might buy from you…"[38]
Cory Doctorow co-author of *Chokepoint Capitalism*

"In an ecosystem patrolled by large predators, the original producer survives only by staying ahead, finding new ideas that are still too small or too unfamiliar to attract major investors. This function must be protected. Public investment should explicitly support biodiversity, helping those who must scout for new ideas in order to survive. We should have the courage to finance not only projects, but also the most innovative companies, creating a form of patient capital that respects their organic growth. If we leave these choices to large industry players, we will end up with plantations of bananas or hazelnuts, all identical. But we will never have forests. And fairy tales are born in forests, not in plantations"[39]
Carlo Cresto-Dina

AI is, of course, a major disruptor across the entire ecosystem. Applications of AI, already being embedded in many parts of the creative value chain, have the potential to make processes more efficient and also to replace creative generation with derivation in multiple forms. Large Language Models and data skimming challenge established protections for IP rights, moral rights and ICIP, extracting value from creative work entirely out of context – many Australian artists now say they do not know if their copyright is being violated.[40]

New developments in AI, virtual production, and virtual/augmented reality in screen practice.

Increasingly, AI is being used in global screen sectors – primarily in early development (e.g. idea generation) and post-production (e.g. subtitling and metadata generation). Because AI is embedded as a standard feature in software applications, many screen sector workers may be using it without realising.[41] It has the capacity to merge some stages of the traditional value chain – by enabling edits to be done in real time, for example.

Screen Currency's industry study found AI adoption is uneven and often undisclosed – with some use in early development and prototyping, alongside ambivalence about its use in final creative products.

This parallels a recent global study by Olsberg SPI on the use of AI in screen industries which found "Ethical, legal and reputational concerns, especially around final creative outputs, make individuals and organisations cautious both in adopting the technology and in disclosing how they employ it."[42]

The study reveals AI developers are starting to adapt models for the sector's creative workflows, but currently available AI tools have limited creative flexibility, meaning they often fall short for production needs. Proprietary tools are being developed by some large organisations, meaning that expertise is becoming increasingly concentrated. Some have called for locally developed sovereign AI models to address these issues.

[38] Cory Doctorow 2022 "What is Chokepoint Capitalism?"https://pluralistic.net/2022/08/21/what-is-chokepoint-capitalism
[39] https://cineuropa.org/en/interview/490835
[40] Creative Australia, David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya (2024) *Artists as Workers: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia* https://creative.gov.au/research/artists-workers-economic-study-professional-artists-australia
[41] Foresight Lab report prepared by Olsberg SPI (2026) *AI Policy and its Impacts on the Screen Sector Across the Globe* https://a.storyblok.com/f/313404/x/69ac89d32c/ai-policy-and-its-impacts-on-the-screen-sector-across-the-globe.pdf p.9
[42] *Ibid*.

In Australia, the use of globally-produced Large Language Models (LLMs) without adaptation for the local environment can lead to poor representation of and cultural specificity related to the unique dynamics of Australian life and cultural diversity – particularly Australian First Nations culture.

The recently updated Department of Industry Science and Resources voluntary AI Ethic Principles seek to ensure that AI models are safe, fair, pluralistic, and human centred in their approach.

IP and copyright protections in the training and deployment of LLMs remain major concerns for the creative sector. As part of the Australian Governments' copyright framework review, the Attorney General recently ruled out a text and data mining exemption, setting limits on the use of creative works to train LLMs "so that Australian creators are protected and supported while unlocking new uses of copyright material".[43] The review includes a Copyright and AI Reference Group that will explore licencing frameworks and seek to clarify or update how copyright law applies to material generated through the use of AI.

Some AI proponents have expressed concern the current policymaking focus on IP protection and traditional modes of production has held back productive engagement with new technologies that would enable the sector to realise the potential of new, software-driven forms of production.[44]

New technologies are disrupting workflows and occupations, including artists working across visual effects, animation, foley sound and voiceovers. However new tools and production techniques also offer new opportunities. Rapid change is particularly transforming animation and visual effects.[45]

Opportunities for Cultural Policy

As a major funder and 'market shaper' in both arts and screen, government holds levers that can assist to create better conditions for creative practice. Government can set terms of trade that encourage better outcomes for Australian creatives to retain the IP in their creative works. These could include using the lever of government funding and incentives to create better market terms for small-to medium creative businesses, and assist them to maintain greater equity in their IP. Setting conditions on project funding through creative sector agencies could assist in shaping better market conditions for compensation and ongoing returns to the originators of IP, particularly in projects with breakout success.

While they do not have substantial dealmaking power, small businesses and creative organisations could benefit from dedicated capacity build programs and funding support to enable them to adapt their business models to explore and pilot new pathways to market, new ways of connecting and sustaining engagement with audiences, and new revenue streams from their creative practice.

Cultural policy will need to address the copyright concerns for artists and creatives in relation to AI and should advocate for protections and guardrails in the principles, uses and standards adopted across government.

[43] The Hon Michelle Rowland MP Media Release (26 October, 2025). *Albanese Government to ensure Australia is prepared for future copyright challenges emerging from AI* https://ministers.ag.gov.au/media-centre/albanese-government-ensure-australia-prepared-future-copyright-challenges-emerging-ai-26-10-2025
[44] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Industry Insights,* prepared by McAtamney + Advisors. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/industry/
[45] Screen Australia 2026, *ibid*

Potential Actions: IP protections for creatives

- Ensure that whole of government AI principles and protect IP, moral rights and ICIP in creative work.
- Build rigorous terms of trade and funding conditions into federal agency investments that influence deal terms to support Australian creative businesses and practitioners to retain rights in their own IP.
- Support small-to-medium enterprises with capacity building and targeted funding for business model development and adaptation.

Idea 5: Creative workforce skills needs

The problem

Cultural and creative industries are labour intensive, based on human capital, skills and knowledge. However many parts of the creative sector are facing workforce challenges and critical skills gaps. Systemic issues including barriers to entry and career progression, the lack of clear pathways, and retention challenges were accelerated by the disruptions of COVID – many of these issues are under the scope of current work and research by Creative Workplaces, established under *Revive*. Creative Australia's *Arts Workforce Scoping study* developed for DEWR's jobs and skills council Services and Creative Skills Australia confirmed that:

> Australia's creative industries are facing critical workforce and skills shortages. These are exacerbated by the economic climate; precarious work conditions; generational shifts in workplace expectations; a disconnect between formal education and industry needs; an imbalance between creative and business skills; technological changes; impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; workforce exits; low wages; competition with better paid jobs and industries; limited career progression opportunities and visible pathways; overwork, leading to burnout and leadership challenges; regional barriers to workforce participation and training; and slow progress on diversity, equity and inclusion due to structural barriers and limited resources, capacity and knowledge.[46]
>
> **Creative Australia *Arts Workforce Scoping study***

Opportunities for Cultural Policy

The study has highlighted needs for new or re-invigorated initiatives to:

- fill identified gaps in formal education and training, particularly for specialised production and technical roles,
- bridge gaps between formal education and industry needs through strengthened partnerships and feedback mechanisms,
- strengthen support for industry-led, on-the-job mentoring and traineeships,
- build skills needed across multiple sectors, such as business skills for creatives, finance and accounting skills, and management and leadership skills.

The scoping study identified opportunities to address these needs via mentoring programs, on-the-job-training and cross-sector collaborations. Industry-education partnerships were emphasised as crucial, as well as flexible, accessible training models (such as microcredentials offered online or on-the-job). Screen Australia Production Infrastructure and Capacity Analysis also recommended increasing interstate initiatives, bridging the gap between industry and education programs, micro-credentials, continuous upskilling and innovative approaches to training programs to strengthen Australia's competitiveness.[47]

Potential Actions: Creative workforce skills needs

- Support for industry-based models, similar to the Arts Centre Melbourne Arts Industry Learning[48] crew training program
- Build training pathways, recognising multiple forms of training via microcredentials
- Move beyond sector consultation to funding actions that respond to Creative Australia Arts Workforce Scoping study

[46] Creative Australia's *Arts Workforce Scoping study.* creative.gov.au/research/creative-workforce-scoping-study
[47] Screen Australia and Olsberg SPI (2026) *Production Infrastructure and Capacity Analysis for Australia's Screen Production Sector* www.o-spi.com/news/spi-publishes-a-production-infrastructure-and-capacity-analysis-for-australias-screen-production-sector
[48] https://www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/learn/arts-industry-learning

Idea 6: Impact investing

The problem

Cultural funding is finite and never reaches the full scale and ambition of the creative sector. The many social impacts of cultural participation are now widely recognised but poorly incentivised. The National Cultural Policy *Revive* encouraged the development of new 'three-way' partnership models – leveraging Government funding, philanthropy and commercial investment to support arts and culture and the benefits of cultural participation.

> "The development of impact investing as a field – and its broader influence evident in wider markets – is driving integration of positive social, cultural and environmental benefits with financial measures at the centre of performance."[49]
> **Rosemary Addis**

Impact Investing

Social impact investing has been described as "doing well and doing good",[50] often taking the form of government-led private investment for public outcomes. It involves repayable loans that seek both social and financial return. It is "uniquely situated between philanthropic grants and donations, and purely financial investments"[51] as it uses blended finance models to offer repayable loans to support purpose-driven activity.[52] The global impact investing market in 2022 year surpassed US $1.2 trillion[53] - mostly used in renewable energy, affordable housing and health sectors. Many investments are 'de-risked' by government-backed incentives.

> For arts organisations, engaging with impact investing involves: "moving away from a place of need towards a positioning of the arts as a resource in our communities"[54]
> **Tim Jones, Artscape, Toronto**

Opportunities for Cultural Policy

In arts and culture, impact investing is a way of unlocking new financing partnerships and structures that are aligned around purpose and can be transformative for arts organisations. Impact investing requires a vision of how assets or resources, whether tangible (such as a building or piece of equipment) or intangible (like programming or services) can be used to leverage investment for social good. Global examples in the UK, the US and Canada have significant learnings for applications in Australia's creative sector.

Impact investing in arts and culture can:

- Make limited resources go further in the sector;
- Address market failure where existing channels for capital (e.g. bank loans) are inaccessible;
- Improve impact measurement;
- Encourage new thinking around existing assets;
- Increase the availability of capital by attracting more investors to impactful investments that would otherwise not meet their risk and return targets;
- Offer greater flexibility to arts organisations by being unsecured, offering more affordable rates, or longer repayment terms (or a combination of all three).

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[49] Rosemary Addis, https://www.creativityculturecapital.org/blog/author/rosemaryaddis/
[50] Karim Harji and Tessa Hebb (2021) *Impact Investing in Canada: Notes from the Field* Muttart Foundation p.6
[51] Elizabeth MacKinnon and Christine Pellerin (2018) *More Than Money* Metcalf Foundation. P.10
[52] Blended finance can also improve investment economics by subsidising the operating costs of a nascent fund as markets develop, adapted from: The GIIN, Big Society Capital, World Bank Independent Evaluation Group
[53] https://thegiin.org/research/publication/impact-investing-market-size-2022/
[54] Karim Harji and Tessa Hebb (2021) *Impact Investing in Canada: Notes from the Field* Muttart Foundation

Impact investing does not replace grant-making, but brings new money and models into the ecosystem, 'recycles investments' and extends the social outcomes of arts and culture:

> Whilst not a replacement for grant support, social impact investment can help funding for arts and culture go further since the money that is repaid to investors can be recycled to support more organisations, helping to achieve a greater total impact.[55]

Figurative (developed at NESTA UK) creative industries' investments have also been used for:

- Expansion of existing revenue streams (e.g. educational programs – see Pinc College);
- Development of new revenue streams (e.g. screen outputs for live shows, e.g Soho Theatre),
- New funding models (e.g. Music Venue Properties);
- Capital projects which may overlap with new or existing business models, eg bridging capital to help organisations to buy a building/ venue (e.g. Talent House);
- Funding new/additional staff in business development / sales (consultants / freelancers);
- Purchasing equipment and infrastructure: e.g IT and data management systems;
- PR and marketing activity; and
- Underwriting the risk of (new) activities.

Investor Incentives

Different kinds of investors have different motivations for and requirements of financing structures. The benefits that motivate them are, variously:

- Social impact;
- Innovation in investing approaches;
- De-risked loans at agreed rates;
- Values and mission alignment; and
- Investor demand (particularly among younger investors).[56]

Investors in the UK's Arts Impact Fund have all received agreed returns and have come back to participate again in the Arts and Culture Impact Fund.

Impact investing blended finance models may involve credit enhancements offered by a purpose-driven player – often government – to de-risk and incentivise private investment.

Such incentives are often described as catalytic capital – patient, risk-tolerant, concessionary, and flexible) investments that accept disproportionate risk and/or concessionary returns relative to a conventional investment.[57] They may take the form of:

- guarantees: an agreement promising to pay the investor in the event the investee can't;
- junior equity: equity or shares issued by a company that rank below other shares or stocks issued by the same company; or
- subordinated debt: a 'first loss' position ranked behind secured lenders in the order in which debts are repaid (often up to an agreed threshold) for the purpose of releasing other capital.

In the Australian context, any losses on loans or rates charged below market rates made by private ancillary funds (PAFs) to DGR status entities may be credited as distributions.[58]

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[55] Why social impact investment? NESTA Arts and Culture Finance www.artsculturefinance.org
[56] Impact Investing Hub - Field Guide to Impact Investing V3.0.pdf - Zoho WorkDrive (zohoexternal.com) p.13 & 18
[57] Catalytic Capital at Work - MacArthur Foundation (macfound.org) (2019)
[58] Philanthropy Australia Impact Investing Practice: Using Blended Finance presentation April 2023

Incentives for arts organisations

International examples have evidenced substantial benefits to arts organisations of participating in social financing structures including:

- Increased access to new forms of funding;
- Access to capital on flexible and tailored terms in areas of market failure;
- Greater financial resilience;
- Greater financial literacy and capability;
- Longer term strategic planning;
- Strengthened impact measurement frameworks;
- Genuine stake in shared outcomes;
- New relationships and 'backers'; and
- Opportunities to think about investing their own capital (including endowments)

Taking on long-term loans represents a paradigm shift for many in the not-for-profit arts sector. Investees need clear plans to repay the loan at the agreed rate within timeframes. This requires:

- a level of entrepreneurialism and appetite to take on risk;
- a stable governance environment;
- financial literacy in developing business models and reporting; and
- capacity to measure and demonstrate impact.

For governments

Governments need to be conscious of their role in the investing landscape to avoid replacing market investment. Governments globally have supported social impact investing models, because they:

- Attract new private investment into sector;
- Recycle investments making funding go further;
- Improve financial literacy and capability across the sector (decreasing reliance on grants);
- Strengthen the social case for arts and culture; and
- Bring arts and culture into a range of cross-portfolio challenges.

Substantial commitments have been made to support impact investing in other markets (e.g Canada and the UK). The Australian Government uses the model in other sectors – including regional development programs run by DFAT, and social housing and renewable energy investments.

Creative Australia has publicly signalled its interest in creative industries impact investing, building on sector consultation and capacity building with international impact investing experts since 2023. Creative Australia will partner with the philanthropic sector to raise private capital against an investment of government funds to create a demonstration Creative Industries Impact Fund.[59]

Potential Actions: Impact investing

- Develop early indicators to evaluate pilot creative industries impact investment models, including any fund established by Creative Australia
- Embed recoupable Impact Investing as form of investment via Cultural Policy
- Support the development of consistent and robust sector impact measurement frameworks based on tailored organisational and sectoral Theory of Change models
- Build support for sector investment readiness, financial literacy and capabilities into National Cultural Policy
- Support capability building for strengthened business models and evaluation frameworks for purpose-driven organisations

[59] https://creative.gov.au/partnerships-philanthropy/partner-invest/impact-investment

Idea 7: Challenge briefs

The problem

In an ecology under pressure, no actors are incentivised to innovate for broader benefit beyond their own current and intransigent problems. Great ideas are not given space to emerge from collaborations between organisations and practitioners with unique perspectives on bigger challenges, as such, the conditions for innovation are constrained.

> "As the influential economist Mariana Mazzucato has explored in her work, markets built in partnership through the efforts of business, labour and government are still the best mechanism we have to efficiently and effectively direct resources."[60]
>
> **Federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers**

Opportunities for Cultural Policy

Challenge briefs use funding with tight conditions to incentivise and orient sector activity towards addressing identified problems, gaps or cultural needs. These can be 'mission' or issues-based. Economist Mariana Mazzucato is a leading advocate on mission-based approached to complex problems or systemic challenges, whereby Governments set challenges and incentivise the private sector to orient their activity towards ambitious collective outcomes. Mazzucato suggests that a new orientation requires three areas of new thinking in:

(1) public sector capabilities and the tools of government from procurement to prize schemes — to drive goal oriented experimentation;
(2) financing mechanisms the ways that public financing can crowd-in and galvanize other forms of investment; and
(3) citizen engagement ways to harness social movements and participation in a creative, open and empowering process of challenge-led innovation.[61]

A **creative industries** based example of this was enacted by the Creative Clusters model in the UK, in which, in line with the unique geography, dynamics, strengths and sector specialisations of location-based "clusters" the following factors are identified:

- creative sector -related challenges
- key industry and not-for-profit networks
- a minimum number of business partners
- a minimum threshold of local / regional government support
- relevant R&D programs required to meet challenges (devised with partners)
- matched funding potential from industry

A minimum proportion of funding is then allocated to businesses and their R&D activities through a competitive challenge brief approach.

Potential Actions: Challenge briefs

- Build a framework for creative challenge briefs to address systemic and/or structural constraints: these may be sector-specific, (e.g. tailored CRMs for small organisations) or intersectoral (e.g. more environmentally sustainable practices)
- Allocate innovation funding with clear requirements for collaboration between organisations confronting shared challenges from different fields of expertise (which may include NGOs, NFPs, commercial businesses, aligned local or state government programs, philanthropy, social enterprises and and other types of bodies)

[60] Jim Chalmers, *Capitalism After the Crisis* The Monthly Essay, February 2023
[61] https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/d960bad0-ffce-4e7d-a38e-517650304065_en?filename=ec_rtd_mazzucato-report-issue2_072019.pdf

Idea 8: Creative cooperatives

The problem

Individual creatives do not have the power to address systemic imbalances in developing sector norms, access to data and better deal terms. Findings of the *Artists as Workers* Survey of Professional Artists in Australia have emphasised the ongoing and compounding challenges for artists with low remuneration, less time to dedicate to creative practice and a low level of confidence in their business skills.[62]

One way to build their agency is to support collectivised models and networks that can support better outcomes for creative workers and businesses. The International Labour Organisation advocates for collective bargaining and social dialogue to advance fair pay, safety and social protection for workers in the arts and entertainment sector.[63]

Similarly, small to medium arts organisations (often led by small number of FTE stretching across multiple areas of responsibility) have long described the pressures they experience in managing the competing administrative demands of funding applications, acquittals, compliance, insurances, invoicing, reporting and business management. These pressures can make creative businesses less viable and lead to substantial burnout of the creative workforce, contributing to retention issues, including among leadership.

Opportunities for Cultural Policy

To establish collective structures that reduce the administrative and legal burdens of managing creative careers and small arts organisations, including by developing shared tools, resources and platforms that enable creative work. Government investment could leverage philanthropic and jurisdictional investment allowing time for the model to build sufficient scale and utility to become self-sustaining. Such models have the potential to:

- reduce the administrative and legal burdens on the sector, particularly independent artists and small-to medium creative businesses
- share collective resources, including platforms, tools and services
- support better remuneration and industrial standards for creative work

International models of social enterprise, cooperatives and government-run platforms intended to reduce the administrative burden on artists and small companies may provide useful inspiration for a new approach to industry development and the management of service delivery partnerships. As the 'original gig workers', creative practitioners are experiencing increasing precarity and multiple competing pressures.

Models developed across Europe to address some of these challenges include:

> Smart Coop, an organisation that started as a social enterprise in Belgium two decades ago to support artists by providing legal protections and reducing the administrative burden of managing creative careers. Their core objective is to support more secure careers for autonomous/ freelance workers. Founded by a grant from Govt, Smart created a decentralised digital platform with simple forms (to take the place of contracts, invoices, expense notes) to build standardised approaches and reduce the admin burden on artists. They now have 40,000 members in seven countries and a user base of 200,000 people.

[62] Creative Australia, David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya (2024) *Artists as Workers: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia* https://creative.gov.au/research/artists-workers-economic-study-professional-artists-australia

[63] www.ilo.org/resource/news/new-ilo-report-highlights-collective-bargaining-key-decent-work-arts

Smart treat their members as employees, covering their insurance and finance functions: a member declares their upcoming gigs/ tours/ contracts and Smart insures them and takes over the administration of their invoicing – charging percentage of the value of the invoice – including ensuring they are paid within seven days via a 'mutualised salary guarantee fund'.
As well as the platform, Smart offers:

- micro-financing loans to assist artists to buy equipment etc.
- creative hubs that build support networks and per-to-peer connection.
- personal advisors for each member (they now employ 80 advisors).
- contracts for long-term members to assist them to access rents and loans
- advocacy for new models of social security

Smart have over time become a platform for advocacy and collective bargaining for artists that has negotiated better terms for remuneration and working standards across the sector.

Guso, run by the French Government, is platform that offers forms for easier contracting and payment mechanisms for artists and non-regular organisers of events (community organisers, schools, small live venues and bars) to support them with easier administration to pay artists fairly and legally.

Some 'like' services are already partially delivered by peak bodies and organisations e.g. NAVA and their role in insurances for visual artists; grant writing support from Arts Northern Rivers and South East Arts; auspicing by Auspicious Arts and Sunshine Coast Creative Alliance free or discounted legal/copyright/licensing advice and/or standard contract templates offered by Arts Law, the Copyright Council, Auspicious Arts and the MEAA. Some of the key organisations providing legal advice (Arts LAW and Copyright Council) often have long wait times due to the high demand for their services. Any developments in this area would need to be mindful of impacts on partners and stakeholders.

As with any new funding approach, a new collective model would require consultation and sector engagement to design. The model would seek to address a clearly identified set of sector needs, where appetite for new solutions is strong.

Potential Actions: Creative cooperatives

- Consult sector on scope for collaborative models and structures to support individual artists and small organisations
- Collaborate with existing networks and peak bodies to explore potential for extension of organisational remits to support auspicing
- Incentivise sector collective bargaining through support for the development of new models and early stage investment

Idea 9: Discoverability

The problem

Discoverability is one of the key challenges facing local content in the global digital environment. While new platforms have enabled more ready access to a wider range of creative content for audiences and have enabled some local content to 'break out' globally, they have created vastly greater competition for local creative producers. The global nature of these platforms, and the mechanics of the algorithms that underpin them have steadily eroded 'home ground advantage'. Australian musicians, filmmakers and content creators are now competing with the world in our own loungerooms and, increasingly, have to gain attention globally before they can be discovered by local audiences.

Creative Australia's *Listening In* research found that 76% of Australians said they could easily find and access Australian music, and 66% would like to listen to more Australian music.

> "While audiences have access to more music than ever before, concerns have been raised about the discoverability of new Australian music on these online platforms, especially for Australian audiences. Here, Australian music competes with music from other major English language markets – mainly the United Kingdom and the United States – and with music from the rest of the world. It is also in competition with all music ever recorded and released. Many in the industry hold concerns about algorithms and AI-generated technologies."[64]

In Screen Currency's Australian audience survey, only 36% of respondents agreed it was easy to find local content, even though 75% said they were interested in watching more.

> Many Screen Currency audience research participants described viewing and gaming choices that are driven by a desire for relaxation and entertainment[65] rather than higher order concerns to do with Australian culture or local identity. These choices are both enabled and reinforced by now-ubiquitous platforms embedded with technological and behavioural defaults. Many were aware that the functionality of streaming platforms have reduced the discoverability of local content.[66]

Content abundance can generate choice fatigue or overload and can lead to an adoption of behavioural defaults or habits that make it easier to manage.[67] A recent study found that many of these habits are influenced by interface design which users either adopt or attempt to work around,[68] noting that "…habitual choice is the norm from which deliberative, conscious and reflective choice departs (defaulting is the default, so to speak)."[69] Choice is, to some extent, structured by interface design – what we see first, what is recommended to us (often as 'watch next' or 'because you watched' suggestions) and the genres or types of content we are nudged and encouraged to 'discover'. As these discovery interfaces do not tend to tag or group Australian stories, they do not favour discovery of local content.

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[64] Creative Australia 2025, Listening In: Insights on music discovery and engagement.

[65] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Audience Insights,* based on a weighted, nationally representative survey of 2,404 Australians by 89 Degrees East. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/audience/

[66] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Insights Overview.* https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/overview/

[67] Johnson, Lobato and Scarlata (2025) "Default viewing: Reconceptualising choice and habit in television audience research," *Media Culture and Society.* Vol. 47(5) pp.893–909, p.894

[68] Johnson et al (2025) *ibid*. p.902

[69] Johnson et al (2025) *ibid*. p.902 and p.896

International research shows that audiences worldwide face two main challenges when navigating streaming platforms: not knowing what they want to watch in the context of large catalogues and knowing what they want to watch but struggling to locate it.[70]

Screen Currency's Australian audience survey found that platform interfaces (often driven by algorithms) play a major role in discovery: 4 in 10 Australians say recommendations from streaming platforms are one of the ways they find out about new Australian screen content, with older audiences more reliant on advertising and younger audiences on social media.

Deeper discussions in Screen Currency audience forums revealed a level of mistrust in the role of algorithms and how they are controlling discovery. This mirrors Gracenote's 2025 global study which found that more than 46% of viewers agree that it is getting harder to find content they want to watch on streamers and more than 25% don't believe platform recommendations help them find relevant content.[71] Screen Currency participants described their viewing being almost entirely driven by recommendations, and many of these recommendations are driven by technologies that have no curation function for local preferences or interests. These findings were echoed in Music Australia's *The Bass Line* research which raised issued of algorithmic bias impacting on the discoverability of local recording artists.[72]

Opportunities for Cultural Policy

Support for producing Australian content is no longer enough; building awareness and engagement is critical to protecting Australia's creative and cultural ecology. It may no longer be enough to "make it Australian", we now need to support more frictionless discoverability to "make it easy" to engage with local creative content in all forms. Tagging content as local/Australian would both make it searchable and 'teach' the algorithm where audiences have local content preferences and interests.

Independent creative producers, smaller production companies, musicians and games developers tend to have little control of how their work is positioned and marketed. Additional resources for marketing and alternative pathways may assist to provide greater agency to creators.

Better access to audience and industry data (see Idea 10) may equip practitioners to build and maintain relationships with their audience, and to benefit from understanding responses to and engagement with their content.

Potential Actions: Discoverability

- Develop platform partnerships with digital streaming services to support the tagging and searchability of Australian content on digital platforms.
- Increase marketing support for Australian creative work.
- Extend approaches such as the #Ausify music campaign across other creative industries to encourage engagement with local creative content.

[70] Gracenote 2025, *State of Play: Data is the key to solving the paradox of choice for streaming viewers.* https://gracenote.com/insights/2025-state-of-play/
[71] Gracenote 2025, *ibid*.
[72] Music Australia and McAtamney + Advisors *The Bass Line: Charting the economic contribution of Australia's music industry* https://creative.gov.au/sites/creative-australia/files/documents/2025-06/ACA_303439_The%20Bass%20Line%20Report%20%28Music%20Australia%29_FA%20Web.pdf

Idea 10: Data sharing

The problem

Access to audience data is essential to realising multiple forms of value from creative work. Value – including new derivative works, rights sales and other revenue streams – can accrue long after production through royalties, cultural influence and audience data.[73] They are essential to creative practitioners and businesses' ability to access to information about the performance of their work and to benefit from downstream value. Audience data from digital streaming platforms is not made available to the producers of creative content, the broader sector, funding agencies or researchers.

Audience data (which informs rights management, performance analytics and renewal decisions) tends to be closely held by the global digital platforms that now dominate our creative industries.

Stakeholders in the Screen Currency research expressed significant concern about these data gaps, and reported that while deal structures with distributors and platforms can sustain activity and capability, they often leave Australian businesses with limited ability to access audience data. a major constraint for effective marketing and audience development. Without usable data, distributors and producers felt hindered in efforts to target marketing, build audiences over time, or learn from past releases.[74]

Streaming platforms such as Netflix and Spotify, gather data on subscribers' engagement history, search queries, social media interactions, IP addresses, gender and date of birth, among other data points,[75] and some also make 'inferences' about interests and preferences.[76]

Opportunities for Cultural Policy

Given the involvement of government support and investment in creative industries, Cultural Policy could take a proactive role in setting industry standards for data sharing, particularly for work that benefits from public funding or incentives.

Potential Actions: Data sharing

- Engage sector on minimum data needs and standards
- Strengthen data sharing arrangements between Australian creative sector bodies, broadcasters and agencies
- Negotiate data arrangements with digital streaming services to share data on Australian audiences and performance of Australian creative works
- Explore the use of the audit powers of the Australian Taxation Office to improve industry data
- Extend and support the work of the Statistics Working Group the Meeting of Cultural Ministers to build improved national accounts for cultural statistics
- Continue to fund and improve the work of the ABS in tracking cultural production, participation and engagement – recognising the value of longitudinal data sets while ensuring approaches are responsive to changing sectors and modes of participation

[73] Caves R E 2000, *Creative Industries: Contracts Between Art and Commerce*, Harvard University Press; KEA & PPMI 2017, *Mapping the Creative Value Chains – A Study on the Economy of Culture in the Digital Age*; Towse R 2019, *A Textbook of Cultural Economics* (3rd ed. Cambridge University Press).

[74] Screen Australia 2026, *Screen Currency 2026: Industry Insights,* prepared by McAtamney + Advisors. https://screencurrency.screenaustralia.gov.au/industry/

[75] Netflix, Privacy Statement, https://help.netflix.com/legal/privacy.

[76] Spotify, Spotify Privacy Policy, www.spotify.com/au/legal/privacy-policy.

Summary of Proposed Actions

Actions: First Nations Talent Development

- Collaborate with Creative Australia's First Nations Board and First Nations screen network to embed First Nations-relevant talent development programs and principles in the next iteration of National Cultural Policy
- Resource identified opportunities to build better coordination efforts across the sector

Actions: Inclusive Pathways + Sector Standards

- Build commonly agreed principles into sector-wide 'minimum threshold' standards to reduce the burden of self-advocacy on individual creative practitioners from underrepresented communities
- Embed in Cultural Policy a commitment to a sector framework for collaborative diversity standards and reasonable adjustments across the sector as a baseline for good practice
- Build people-centred inclusive pathways by designing programs that incentivise responsive collaboration between organisations and agencies

Actions: Regional Creative Partnerships

- In collaboration with the Regional Arts Australia network, scope the development of Regional Creative Partnerships through identification of areas with existing creative infrastructure that would benefit from strengthened collaborative networks
- Build collaboration across tiers of government through partnership with state government initiatives such as the Regional NSW Strategic Partnerships Program, under the plan for regional NSW arts, culture and creative industries *Heartland*[77]
- Develop a responsive program to work with State Government and Local Government Areas, Regional Arts Australia's network and community organisations to co-design creative partnerships models based on the cultural needs and aspirations of regional communities
- Pilot co-funded investments via 'host' organisation with funding agreements for experimental creative partnerships models with ambitious and locally relevant sector-building and skills-development outcomes
- Build on Creative Australia's capability building programs and Emerging Regional Arts Leaders Scholarships for Regional Creative Partnerships cohorts to exchange knowledge and build skills
- Support dedicated fundraising and partnerships capabilities within Regional Creative Partnerships via Creative Australia's private investment coaching support and the fundraising platform of the Australian Cultural Fund
- Encourage models that build in agreed cultural participation, skills development and identifiable social and policy outcomes to explore and attract other forms of investment

Actions: IP protections for Creatives

- Build rigorous terms of trade and funding conditions into federal agency investments that support Australian creative businesses and practitioners to retain rights in their own IP
- Ensure that whole of government AI principles and protect IP, moral rights and ICIP in creative work
- Support small-to-medium enterprises with capacity building and targeted funding for business model development and adaptation.

[77] https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2026-02/heartland-plan-for-regional-nsw-artsculture-and-creative-industries-2026-2035.pdf

Actions: Creative Workforce Skills Needs

- Support for industry-based models, and training programs
- Build training pathways, recognising multiple forms of training via microcredentials
- Move beyond sector consultation to funding actions that respond to Creative Australia Arts Workforce Scoping study

Actions: Impact Investing

- Develop early indicators to evaluate pilot creative industries impact investment models, including any fund established by Creative Australia
- Embed recoupable Impact Investing in Cultural Policy
- Support the development of consistent and robust sector impact measurement frameworks based on tailored organisational and sectoral Theory of Change models
- Support sector investment readiness, financial literacy and capabilities
- Support capability building for strengthened business models and evaluation frameworks for purpose-driven organisations

Actions: Challenge Briefs

- Build a framework for creative challenge briefs to address systemic and/ or structural constraints
- Allocate innovation funding with clear requirements for collaboration between organisations confronting shared challenges from different fields of expertise (which may include NGOs, NFPs, commercial businesses, aligned local or state government programs, philanthropy, social enterprises and other bodies)

Actions: Creative Cooperatives

- Consult sector on scope for collaborative models and structures to support individual artists and small organisations
- Collaborate with existing networks and peak bodies to explore potential for extension of organisational remits to support auspicing
- Incentivise sector collective bargaining through support for the development of new models and early stage investment

Actions: Discoverability

- Develop platform partnerships with digital streaming services to support the tagging and searchability of Australian content on digital platforms
- Increase marketing support for Australian creative work
- Extend approaches such as the #Ausify music campaign across other creative industries to encourage engagement with local creative content

Actions: Data Sharing

- Engage sector on minimum data needs and standards
- Strengthen data sharing arrangements between Australian creative sector bodies, broadcasters and agencies
- Negotiate data arrangements with digital streaming services to share data on Australian audiences and performance of Australian creative works
- Explore use of the audit powers of the Australian Taxation Office to improve industry data
- Extend and support the work of the Statistics Working Group the Meeting of Cultural Ministers to build improved national accounts for cultural statistics
- Continue to fund and improve the work of the ABS in tracking cultural production, participation and engagement – recognising the value of longitudinal data sets while ensuring approaches are responsive to changing sectors and modes of participation