



Punctum Statement for National Cultural Policy Consultation

We are delighted that our government is continuing to consult with the creative industries and arts sector, and we relish this opportunity to contribute to honing a national cultural policy that paves the way for multiple places, artists, cultural infrastructures and audiences.

Punctum experiments in live arts and fosters ecologies of practice that nourish regional artists and communities connecting them to national and international arenas. We are based on Djaara Country, Central Victoria and have direct lived experience of the extent to which these ecologies are critical to expressing and connecting *multiple* stories of place. A place is always more than one story. Places remember *multiple* events. Creative ecologies are borderless and bring together partners of shared values with differing operational scales to ensure resilience. Punctum's current Strong Heart of the Jade Road program is an example. It connects stories of neolithic jade trade and artisanship in regional Taiwan and regional Philippines, with stories of the 19th century Chinese labourers of the central Victorian goldfields. In bringing together regional artists and institutions from these countries, it mirrors the borderless way in which specific stories of places are interconnected and layered - enriching reciprocal exchange and extending opportunity.

As a well-regarded leader in both regional and experimental practice, we contribute our learnings to partnership innovation at a national level. We are one of three regional arts organisations contributing to a pilot model of new work production and touring with the recently established Experimental Commissioning Consortium – a collegiate of over 15 independent arts organisations of differing scales. We understand deeply that local opportunities and creative career trajectories are fundamental to a flourishing regional arts & culture ecosystem. We also know that experimental practice is fundamental to innovation and that innovation involves systems of partnership and infrastructure that enable multiple ways of expressing place – and stories. Our greatest creative asset is therefore 'human infrastructure'. A multiplicity of people and jobs are necessary for the production of stories of place, and are crucial to a thriving creative ecology and robust succession.

We emphasize that dedicated mechanisms and greater investment are needed to strengthen our regional ecologies of 'human infrastructure' – where artists are central and regional audiences are meaningfully engaged. With greater emphasis on how the work of creators IS the cultural infrastructure, regional opportunity, experimental practice, innovation, a breadth of audiences, meaningful career trajectories and partnerships will flourish giving national expression to Australia's cultural potential and our rich cultural fabric. We hope to see this reflected in the next National Cultural Policy.