

National Cultural Policy Submission

1470626

Public

Individual

Eleanor Winkler



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is Eleanor, I am a screen producer with 17 years of experience generating film, tv and theatre in Australia and the US. I also a co-founded Bus Stop Films, a not-for-profit film and television training and advocacy organisation for people living with a disability.

I wish to contribute my thoughts to shape the direction of the national cultural policy as it directly involves my life and livelihood. Sustainability with a human-centred approach is needed to ensure a thriving industry that provides safe employment opportunities for artists to live, breath and create, and for Australians to be proud of their culture and stories.

I believe it is critical to continue prioritizing First Nations stories, meaning, financially supporting artistic training and projects helmed by First Nations Artists. While the Everyone Project helped benchmark on screen and crew representation, there should be Director/Producer/Writer tracking and benchmarking.

While I hear Hon Tony Burke MP say “Don’t just think about the dollars,” I have to say, it’s always top of mind. Throughout my professional career, the financial support the sector has received from the government egregiously declined. Community arts organizations have vanished, seeing the critical training grounds for the next generation of artists move increasingly to online-spaces where connection to community is lost. To create empathy in our neighbourhoods, foster innovation, and promote social cohesion and inclusion, we must have public, community run creative spaces. We must fund community arts organisations, and it must be done with a multi-year approach, ensuring artists/arts workers can pay rent and send their kids to school. Without the ability to plan long term, industry disappears.

Now, more than ever there’s an urgency to protect the value of art, and practicing artists from being harvested en masse by large tech firms. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has sent shockwaves through my industry, it’s clearly a huge disruptor. As a tool, it will empower artists to create things I cannot imagine in a 30 second render. On the flipside, it’s being touted (and in some instances used) as a replacement for human labor and creativity. To be frank, I do not support this. I am personally experiencing income instability due to the employment freezes and stock market volatility this emerging tech has generated, and I currently have no way to pay rent. I want to see the Australian Government support the screen and creative sectors by protecting artists’ ability to generate revenue as AI tools enter the marketplace. Value and reward work that is human helmed. Fortify our copyright and restrict tech firms from harvesting our assets without financially rewarding us for our work by rolling out an extended licensing framework.

It is imperative that we hold space for Australians to contemplate and connect. Whether it’s mental space to know their job will exist tomorrow or physical space to see live performance and art, learn new skills, and talk with peers. Invest in Arts and see Australia reap the ROI in employment, GDP, investment, IP, tourism, education, health and cultural fulfillment.