

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As a professional practicing visual artist, I believe the new National Cultural Policy must take meaningful action against censorship, political interference and racism within the arts sector. The policy should reflect the realities artists and arts workers are currently facing and uphold the principles of decolonisation, anti-racism, anti-discrimination, artistic freedom and independence from political influence.

The cultural sector cannot be healthy or sustainable if artists feel intimidated, censored or professionally vulnerable for expressing political opinions or engaging critically with contemporary issues. Artists play an essential role in public discourse. Art has always been a space for critique, reflection, dissent and social dialogue, and this must be protected as a core democratic and cultural value.

The National Cultural Policy should adopt a strong decolonial and anti-racist framework, led by the communities and practitioners already undertaking this work across the sector. Cultural institutions must actively support diversity of thought and experience, particularly for artists from communities that are disproportionately targeted, marginalised or subjected to public hostility. Artists addressing racism, colonisation, war, inequality and other structural injustices should not face institutional abandonment, reputational punishment or barriers to employment as a result of their work or public advocacy.

Freedom of artistic expression must remain central to Australia's cultural infrastructure. This principle is already recognised within the Creative Australia Act and should be strongly upheld in the National Cultural Policy. Artists must be able to create politically engaged, experimental and challenging work without fear of censorship, intimidation or cancellation. They must also be free to participate in public debate, sign open letters, support boycott actions and express ethical or political positions without risking their livelihoods or professional standing.

I am also concerned about increasing political interference within the arts. Public funding processes must remain genuinely independent and operate at arm's length from political influence across federal, state and local government. Politicians should not have the ability to pressure institutions, influence programming decisions or affect funding outcomes for individual artists or projects based on political considerations.

There should also be greater transparency and accountability around the influence of donors, lobbyists and politically connected board members within arts organisations. The National Cultural Policy should support an independent inquiry into political interference in the arts, including the role of lobbying, donations and governance structures in shaping cultural outcomes.

Strong cultural infrastructure depends on artistic independence. If artists and institutions are unable to take risks, challenge power structures or engage critically with urgent social and political issues, the sector becomes weakened creatively and democratically.

I would like to see a National Cultural Policy that genuinely protects artistic freedom, supports anti-racist and decolonial practice, strengthens institutional accountability and ensures artists can contribute to public life without fear of censorship, political pressure or professional retaliation.