

**National Cultural Policy Submission**

1470809

Public and anonymous



I welcome Australia's new National Cultural Policy as an important opportunity to create a stronger, more inclusive and sustainable arts sector for the future. I believe it is encouraging to see greater recognition of underrepresented communities, including Deaf and disabled artists, within Australia's cultural landscape.

As a Deaf artist and arts worker, I see the arts as a powerful way to share language, identity, lived experience and community stories. Deaf artists bring unique creative perspectives, yet there are still very limited opportunities for Deaf people within the arts sector, particularly in professional development, mentorships, employment pathways and representation in galleries and organisations.

In my experience, many organisations still lack awareness or confidence in how to work collaboratively and accessibly with Deaf artists and Deaf communities. Accessibility is often considered too late in the process, rather than being embedded from the beginning. Because of this, opportunities can feel very narrow, with only a small number of genuinely accessible or Deaf-led projects available.

I would like to see Deaf artists not only included in projects but trusted to be the voice within projects as curators, consultants, leaders, storytellers and decision-makers. Too often Deaf artists are invited into spaces after ideas have already been developed, instead of helping shape the direction from the start. Genuine inclusion means Deaf people having authorship, creative leadership and representation across all levels of the arts sector.

I would also like to see stronger support for regional arts and community-led projects. Many Deaf people outside major cities experience additional barriers to access, networking and career development. Regional galleries, festivals and grassroots organisations play an important role in creating visibility, connection and participation for communities that are often overlooked.

Another important issue is sustainability for artists. Many artists continue balancing multiple jobs, short-term contracts and unpaid labour in order to maintain their practice. Emerging artists, Deaf artists and disabled artists often face even greater barriers to long-term career stability. More support is needed through fair pay, accessible funding opportunities, mentorships and pathways for professional growth.

Overall, I see the National Cultural Policy as a positive step forward. However, I hope future developments continue listening closely to artists and communities whose voices have historically been excluded. A strong cultural policy should not only celebrate diverse stories but also ensure people from all backgrounds have genuine opportunities to create, lead and be seen within Australia's cultural sector.