



17 May 2026

Submission paper

Australia's National Cultural Policy, [Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place](#), has provided stability for the arts and cultural sector after years of uncertainty. It has also rebuilt confidence across the sector by clarifying the national commitment to culture as a public good.

While Revive has done a lot to stabilise the sector, the next National Cultural Policy must move beyond supporting isolated artistic outcomes and instead build a connected creative ecosystem that continues to develop audiences, artists, producers, technicians, educators and communities.

Arts, culture and creativity should be recognised as our foundation, essential to innovation, education, community connection and the future workforce. Arts and culture are not discretionary extras, they are central to how Australia imagines itself, connects across difference and prepares for the future. We need to consider how a whole-of-government approach can better utilise the arts, culture and creativity across health, education and foreign affairs to support policy and program delivery.

Australia faces increasing skills shortages across technical and production areas, including lighting, sound, stage management, production management, digital production and live event delivery. At the same time, pathways into producing, arts administration and creative leadership remain fragmented and under-supported. Without long-term investment in workforce development, the sector risks losing critical skills, institutional knowledge and future capacity.

The next National Cultural Policy should outline how it will work with the state governments to support long-term artist, producer and technician development pathways through traineeships, apprenticeships, artist hubs, rehearsal infrastructure and stronger links between education, training and industry. It should recognise that sustainable cultural ecosystems rely not only on artists but on a broader workforce that enables creative work to be produced, presented and shared.

The arts should be recognised for creativity being fundamental to innovation, communication, critical thinking, collaboration and future workforce readiness. Creative and performing arts education should not be treated as supplementary, but as foundational to Australia's future cultural, social and economic wellbeing.

At Seymour Centre alone, over 45,000 young people come through our doors annually as audiences and participants, many experiencing the arts for the first time. These experiences are not only audience development opportunities; they are moments of inspiration that shape confidence, creativity, aspiration and future pathways into cultural and creative life.

Creative participation must also be understood more broadly than attendance alone. Cultural venues increasingly operate as civic and community infrastructure, places where audiences, artists, students and communities gather, collaborate and create together.

SEYMOUR CENTRE seymourcentre.com

Cnr City Rd & Cleveland St
Chippendale, NSW 2008

PO Box 553
Broadway, NSW 2007

ADMINISTRATION



ABN 15 211 513 464

BOX OFFICE





In an increasingly divided and polarised world, arts and culture also play a critical role in strengthening social connection, empathy and belonging. A future National Cultural Policy should support cultural spaces that are genuinely inclusive, welcoming and accessible; places where people from all backgrounds feel seen, valued and invited to participate.

This includes recognising the vital contribution migrant, refugee and multicultural communities make to Australia's cultural identity and ensuring their stories remain visible within our national narrative. Australian identity is enriched, not threatened, by diversity.

As the sector evolves, it is also important that investment in arts and culture translates into tangible creative outcomes for artists, audiences and communities. While recent policy settings have strengthened institutional frameworks and administrative structures, many artists and independent organisations continue to experience increasing difficulty sustaining creative practice, developing new work and building long-term careers. Rising costs, insecure employment, venue pressures and administrative burden are placing significant strain on the sector, particularly within the independent and small-to-medium ecology where much innovation and talent development occurs.

Future investment should prioritise the conditions that enable creative work to happen: time, space, infrastructure, fair pay, technical support, rehearsal and development opportunities, and sustainable producing pathways. Success should not only be measured through policy architecture or organisational growth, but through visible creative outcomes, these being artists making work, technicians employed, producers developed, audiences engaged, communities participating and Australian stories reaching the public.

The next National Cultural Policy should recognise that cultural participation is not only an artistic outcome, but a civic one. Supporting spaces where people gather through creativity, storytelling and shared experience strengthens communities, deepens belonging and helps shape a more connected, confident and resilient Australia.

Recommendations

That the Australian Government:

1. Recognise the arts, culture and creativity as essential to the nation's foundation and create a whole-of-government approach across health, education, foreign affairs and other departments to deliver better policy and program outcomes.
2. Work with the state governments to strengthen long-term pathways for artists, producers, technicians and arts workers through increased investment, traineeships, apprenticeships. Address workforce shortages across the cultural sector, particularly in technical and production fields including lighting, sound, stage management, digital production and live event delivery, while supporting sustainable producing and arts administration pathways.
3. Reposition arts education and recognise creativity as fundamental to innovation, communication, critical thinking, collaboration and future workforce readiness.
4. Support the development of creative hubs, rehearsal infrastructure and flexible community-based cultural spaces that enable participation, collaboration, experimentation and co-created engagement across artforms, generations and communities.



5. Ensure investment and funding models directly support artists and organisations to make and present work, with accessible and proportionate systems that strengthen the independent and small-to-medium sector, foster inclusion and belonging, and deliver tangible creative, workforce and community outcomes.

About Seymour Centre

As part of the University of Sydney, Seymour Centre has been a significant player in Sydney's arts ecology for over 50 years. A multi-venue, multi-disciplinary performing arts centre, we produce performances, host major festivals, support the independent arts sectors, invest in arts education for schools, and align closely with the thought leaders of the University of Sydney. Seymour is a home that supports creative experimentation and values artistic practice. We support artists at all stages of a creative's lifespan, from early introduction to the arts through to international, high-level artistic practice.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Kee
Artistic Director
Seymour Centre

