

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

Jamie Bialkower



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

A Place for Every Story: reflecting the breadth of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.

As it pertains to this pillar and from my perspective as [REDACTED] Jewish Australians do not feel adequately represented across the screen sector. There has been a systemic lack of scripted films and television funded by Screen Australia since the inception of the agency, along with state funding bodies.

We hear a lot in the arts sector about how representation and inclusion matters, about the importance of championing authentic voices, about seeing ourselves reflected back at us. But we don't see these diversity targets making room for Jewish stories. We don't see valued minority status applied to the Jewish community. As a result, the community feels alienated and excluded, which has a negative impact on a general willingness to be visible. Jewish identity has become politicised, and weaponised in a way that is often antithetical to principles of inclusion and safety. By betraying the fundamental principle of tolerance that is regularly practised and offered to other minorities, the arts and cultural sector has acted in a profoundly hypocritical manner, lacking moral conviction and ultimately failing the Jewish community.

Jewish Australians have played a significant role in shaping the Australian cultural landscape over decades, often at the expense of our own culture. The next National Cultural Policy has an opportunity to address this. The importance of visibility cannot be overstated – the impact of an audience member entering someone else's perspective, giving them access to a community they don't know, or have misconceptions about, is profound. It is the ultimate act of empathy, and one that can counter misinformation, stereotypes and ultimately antisemitism. Representation is thus the first step in meaningfully taking steps to change this dynamic, and to address a fundamental imbalance that has been normalised and accepted without comment for too long.

Screen Australia especially has an opportunity to demonstrate cultural leadership and bring state bodies, industry bodies such as SPA and ADG, public broadcasters and commissioners into the conversation so that it is an industry wide effort. The screen sector has a shared responsibility to ensure that the language being directed towards Jewish creatives and Jewish-themed projects is appropriate and considerate, notably in the current context of Royal Commission submissions and the recommendations of the government's antisemitism envoy for the cultural sector. These recommendations have not been implemented by the government. Public funding should not go to institutions, artists or individuals who support or implicitly endorse antisemitic themes or narratives. Arts festivals, galleries and public broadcasters must uphold antidiscrimination values and be accountable for the narratives they promote. Agreements should be drafted to ensure that funding can be terminated where organisations or individuals engage in or facilitate antisemitism. Promoting division or spreading false or distorted narratives must have consequences.

I am pleased that Screen Australia has meaningfully engaged in efforts to foster greater awareness of what the Jewish community is facing.