

## National Cultural Policy Submission

1470971

Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Submission to the National Cultural Policy Consultation 2026

Tall Poppies: The Podcast — [www.tall-poppies.com](http://www.tall-poppies.com)

Produced and hosted by Breandáin O'Shea, Berlin

Tall Poppies: The Podcast is an independently produced long-form interview series featuring exceptional Australians living and working abroad. Founded in Berlin in 2018 by Breandáin O'Shea, an Australian arts journalist, broadcaster, guest lecturer at several European universities and long-time contributor to Deutsche Welle and the ABC, the podcast has built an archive of episodes spanning music, literature, visual art, dance, philosophy and science. Guests include conductor Simone Young, composer Brett Dean, opera director Barrie Kosky, composer Liza Lim, philosopher Peter Singer, author Gail Jones, poet Robert Gray, soprano Joan Sutherland, jazz trombonist Shannon Barnett, singer Siobhan Stagg, Berlin Philharmonic musicians Matthew McDonald, Stanley Dodds and Hector McDonald, dancer Rhys Martin, neuroscientist Matthew Larkum, and more. The series has reached over 10,000 listeners worldwide.

A defining feature of the series is its commitment to First Nations history and culture. Every episode includes substantive engagement with these questions, not as an optional addition, but as central to any honest conversation about Australian identity. Guests are invited to reflect on their relationship to First Nations Australia, on the obligations that come with representing Australian culture abroad, and on the unfinished work of reconciliation. Recent episodes have included frank on-record discussions of the 2023 Voice referendum, with guests speaking candidly about its defeat and their conviction that treaty and truth-telling remain essential. These conversations are preserved in a permanent archive, contributing to a record that will outlast any single news cycle.

This submission argues that Tall Poppies directly advances all five pillars of the incoming National Cultural Policy, and identifies a structural gap: the absence of formal recognition or support for independent oral cultural archives.

**A Place for Every Story.** Tall Poppies records the stories of Australians who have achieved genuine international stature across many disciplines. These are Australian stories that would otherwise go unrecorded.

**Centrality of the Artist.** Each interview treats its subject as a serious professional, documenting in depth the training, practice and creative philosophy behind an international career, a valuable resource for emerging Australian artists navigating similar paths.

**Strong Cultural Infrastructure.** This is the most urgent case. Revive established Music Australia and Writers Australia, and recognised the National Film and Sound Archive as a pillar of audio-visual heritage. Yet there is no equivalent recognition for independent long-form oral cultural archives. The conversations Tall Poppies are recording now cannot be replicated later. The new policy should address this gap through formal recognition, institutional partnership or direct funding.

**Engaging the Audience.** With listeners across the globe, Tall Poppies functions as grassroots cultural diplomacy, extending Australia's cultural reach at no cost to the government.

Tall Poppies is sustained entirely by its listener community. We ask the incoming National Cultural Policy to recognise independent oral cultural archives as a vital part of Australia's cultural infrastructure, and to support this work to continue and grow.