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Australian Network for Art & Technology (ANAT) Submission

New National Cultural Policy Consultation

May 2026

The Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of Australia's next National Cultural Policy.

As we approach our 40th anniversary in 2028, ANAT brings four decades of specialised expertise at the intersection of art, science, and technology, making us one of Australia's most enduring interdisciplinary arts organisations, and a witness to the long arc of cultural policy and its consequences for artists and arts ecologies alike.

Sustained development

Australia's cultural strength is built through the patient, sustained development of artists, ideas, and organisations over time. ANAT's longevity is itself evidence of what continuity makes possible: deep relationships with artists, research institutions, international networks, and the communities that hold and transmit culture across generations. ANAT supports the next National Cultural Policy to recognise continued development with longer term investment, funding structures, timelines, and program design that allow meaningful work to unfold. Transformative cultural work happens through long-term commitment, and as the life force of Australia's arts and cultural ecosystems.

The power of "inter": across generations, cultures, and disciplines

The most vital and enduring creative work emerges from connection and often intergenerational mentorship between emerging and experienced practitioners, intercultural exchange that honours diverse ways of knowing and making, and interdisciplinary collaboration that places artists alongside scientists, technologists, communities, and industries. This includes deep respect for First Nations knowledge systems and creative sovereignty, the original and continuing interdisciplinary practice on this continent, and a foundation any genuine cultural policy must honour.

Australia's next policy should actively cultivate these "inter" conditions: funding models, residency structures, and partnership frameworks that bring people together across differences and enable the generation of new ways of thinking and approaches to arts making and practice. ANAT has always operated at these edges, and we know firsthand that the friction and generosity of genuine collaboration produces work, and knowledge, that no single discipline or generation could create alone.

Arts organisations as sector experts

Specialist arts organisations hold irreplaceable knowledge: decades of embeddedness in a field, its practitioners, its methodologies and histories, held alongside a forward-facing, futurist orientation. In addition to serving as delivery vehicles for government priorities, arts organisations must be recognised as expert partners holding curatorial and programmatic judgment in the public interest. Investing in organisational capacity, leadership, and institutional knowledge is investing in the sector's collective intelligence.

Employment: full careers, full spectrum

A thriving cultural ecology depends on artists and arts workers being able to build full, financially sustainable careers across a lifetime, from first creative acts to the deepest wells of experience. The next policy must address structural barriers that push people out of the sector in mid-career, while creating genuine entry pathways for practitioners across all cultural backgrounds, genders, abilities, and geographies. Employment in the arts is a whole-of-career, whole-of-community, whole-of-life commitment.

Conclusion

ANAT urges a National Cultural Policy built on continuity, expertise, and genuine interdisciplinary, intercultural, and intergenerational ambition and one that centres First Nations creative sovereignty, grows new and diverse audiences, and lays foundations for a shared long-term vision into the next 100 years.

Melissa DeLaney, CEO

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