



Take action for genuine inclusion and access — and against censorship, political interference and racism in the arts

It is crucial that the forthcoming National Cultural Policy reflects the current issues faced by artists and arts workers, as well as the arts sector at large. Jump Left is a purpose-for-profit arts organisation, gallery and NDIS provider based in Naarm/Melbourne. We work at the transition point between supported artistic environments and the professional art world — a gap that the current system does not adequately address. Many artists with disability and neurodivergence are excluded not through overt discrimination, but through structural invisibility: supported environments are chronically underfunded and the mainstream art world engages well with a small number of well-resourced and established models, but lacks the infrastructure and will to engage with the broader ecosystem of smaller and lesser-known organisations and the artists they support. Jump Left acts as a bridge and career intermediary, embedding artists into real projects, professional networks and paid opportunities, and acting as a trusted steward and translation layer between the artist and the art world. Artists with disability can enter professional contexts with less power, less information and a higher risk of exploitation — Jump Left exists to rebalance that dynamic. We are equally concerned by the prevalence of censorship, political interference and racism in the arts, which compound these exclusions and further silence the voices most at risk. This submission is grounded in core values of and commitment to decolonisation, anti-racism, anti-discrimination; artists as the moral compass of the sector; freedom of artistic expression without limitations; freedom from political interference in the arts; and openness, inclusion and access as the foundation of a truly representative cultural life.

Openness, inclusion and access as the foundation of cultural life (Pillars 2: A Place for Every Story, 3: Centrality of the Artist & 5: Every Australian's Story)

- The National Cultural Policy must embed genuine inclusion and access across the arts sector, ensuring that artists with disability, neurodivergence, and other lived experience of marginalisation are not treated as peripheral to cultural life, but recognised as essential contributors to it.
- There is a significant and largely unaddressed gap between supported studio models and mainstream arts pathways. Many artists with disability are capable of and committed to professional practice, but are denied the infrastructure, resources and relationships that other artists take for granted. The National Cultural Policy must explicitly address this gap.
- Artists with disability must be supported not only as participants in the arts, but as professional practitioners with the right to develop, exhibit, be represented and be remunerated for their work on equal terms. This requires dedicated funding for a range of organisations working at the intersection of disability and professional arts practice — organisations that are currently chronically under-resourced. Artists need choice that meets their needs, with where they are at in their career and capacity.
- The NDIS was not designed to support professional arts practice, yet for many artists with disability it is the only available funding mechanism. And with the restructuring of the NDIS over coming years, artists will be affected and many will be worse off. The National Cultural Policy must work in concert with disability policy to ensure that creative and professional development is recognised as a legitimate and fundable pursuit, and that arts organisations providing this support are not left to navigate complex and underfunded service landscapes alone.
- Arts funding, infrastructure and programming must actively dismantle the gatekeeping structures that exclude artists who do not fit traditional institutional pathways. The sector must create and

resource alternative models — including hybrid purpose-for-profit and purpose-driven organisations — that meet artists where they are.

- The National Cultural Policy must recognise the role of small, purpose-driven arts organisations in providing the relational, long-term support that larger institutions cannot. These organisations are often the first and only point of access for artists who have been failed elsewhere, and they must be adequately and sustainably resourced to continue this work.

Commitment to decolonisation, anti-racism and anti-discrimination (Pillars 1: First Nations First, 3: Centrality of the Artist & 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure)

- The National Cultural Policy must take a decolonial, anti-racist and anti-discrimination approach. It should respect and take leadership from those in the sector who are already working from a strong decolonial, anti-racist and anti-discrimination framework.
- The IHRA definition of antisemitism must be removed from all arts, cultural and educational institutions and be replaced with the UN Core Stance of Values: "The UN asserts that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, without distinction of any kind, including race or ethnic origin. It maintains that no state, institution, group, or individual should make any discrimination in human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Artists are the moral compass of the sector (Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist)

- The National Cultural Policy must support artists to continue to be ethical and values-driven leaders of the sector and broader community.
- Artists must be able to speak freely, sign letters and participate in boycott actions without harming their reputation and livelihoods.
- Arts and cultural institutions must respect cultural diversity, and support, champion and care for the diverse conversations that artists bring to their programs, particularly those who have been targeted in the media for speaking out against injustices.
- Artists must not be instrumentalised by institutions, lobbyists, the media and politicians.

Freedom of speech and artistic expression (Pillars 3: Centrality of the Artist & 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure)

- Strong cultural infrastructure must be based on artistic freedom of speech. This is already enshrined in the Creative Australia Act (11.e "to uphold and promote freedom of expression in the arts") and needs to be upheld in the National Cultural Policy.
- In order to create strong cultural infrastructure, art must be able to facilitate critical discourse, address political issues and critique power and class structures.
- In order to create strong cultural infrastructure, there must be an end to the culture of intimidation that prevents artists from expressing and creating art freely.
- The National Cultural Policy must address the prevalence of censorship, targeting and cancellation of artists who speak out against injustices, particularly in relation to nations that have been condemned by the UN for acts of apartheid, genocide and war crimes.

Freedom from political interference in the arts (Pillars 3: Centrality of the Artist & 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure)

- In order to create strong cultural infrastructure, the arts must remain independent and free from political interference.
- The National Cultural Policy must ensure independent and arms-length funding processes across federal, state and local government. This includes ensuring that politicians at all levels must not influence or give advice that results in the provision or removal of funding support of a particular project or artist. This is already enshrined in the Creative Australia Act (article 14.2) and needs to be upheld in the National Cultural Policy.
- A key action for the National Cultural Policy must be to implement an inquiry into political interference in the arts, including through donations and board membership and lobbying.
- Donors must not influence arts organisations and institutions.
- Board members with connections to political parties or lobbyists must be removed.