

# Submission to Australia's Next National Cultural Policy

## *Arts and Disability – Recommended Actions*

### **Introduction**

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of Australia's next National Cultural Policy. This submission focuses on strengthening long-term investment, leadership, accessibility and participation for d/Deaf and disabled artists, arts workers and audiences across Australia's cultural sector.

While Revive and the Equity: Arts and Disability Associated Plan have created important momentum, significant structural barriers remain. Access, disability leadership and inclusive cultural participation must be embedded as permanent and foundational elements of Australia's cultural infrastructure.

The following recommendations aim to support a more ambitious, equitable and internationally connected cultural sector, positioning Australia as a global leader in disability-led creative practice leading toward Brisbane 2032.

### **1. Establish Access as National Cultural Infrastructure**

- Establish a dedicated Sixth Pillar within the National Cultural Policy focused on Access for All Australians.
- Recognise access as foundational cultural infrastructure and the precondition for participation, representation and inclusion.
- Embed disability inclusion and representation as a cross-cutting principle across all policy pillars, funding streams and investment programs.
- Explicitly recognise Deaf and Disability cultures within national cultural policy and investment settings.
- Position Australia as a global leader in disability-led cultural practice leading toward Brisbane 2032.

### **2. Commit to Long-Term Investment in Arts and Disability**

- Commit to ongoing investment in arts and disability practice beyond the current Equity plan.
- Provide new and additional funding for disability inclusion initiatives.
- Introduce clear national targets and accountability measures.
- Recognise disability arts organisations and peak bodies as essential cultural infrastructure.

### **3. Build Accessible Cultural Organisations and Workforces**

- Fund stewardship and implementation of the National Arts and Disability Code of Practice.
- Introduce mandatory minimum access standards for publicly funded organisations.
- Establish a national access accreditation or certification program.

- Require accessible communications and consistent access information.
- Increase disability representation across governance and leadership.

#### **4. Invest in Artists, Arts Workers and Leadership Pathways**

- Transition the Arts and Screen Employment Pathways Pilot Program into a long-term national program.
- Expand leadership pathways into governance, artistic direction and producing roles.
- Support disabled artists across all genres and artforms.
- Invest in Access Coordinator training and employment pathways.

#### **5. Close the Access Investment Gap**

- Fund access costs in addition to standard grant caps.
- Support captioning, Auslan, audio description, relaxed experiences and assistive technologies.
- Introduce audience access subsidies.
- Recognise access as core audience infrastructure.

#### **6. Build a National Disability-Led Touring and Commissioning Pipeline**

- Establish a coordinated national disability-led commissioning and touring framework.
- Create a national commissioning fund for disability-led work.
- Develop a network of access-ready venues and presenters.
- Support international exchange and inbound disability-led work.

#### **7. Strengthen International Exchange and Cultural Leadership**

- Expand international exchange, residencies and touring opportunities.
- Develop long-term global partnerships with disability arts networks and festivals.
- Position disability-led practice within Australia's international cultural diplomacy strategy.

#### **8. Support Intersectional and Community-Led Access Approaches**

- Invest in culturally responsive and community-led access models.
- Support disability-led consultation and research.
- Invest in First Nations disabled-led initiatives.

#### **9. Increase Audience Participation and Cultural Access**

- Support accessible digital participation and online engagement.
- Ensure publicly funded programs demonstrate equitable audience access outcomes.
- Position accessibility as central to audience growth and participation.

#### **10. Build National Research, Data and Evidence Capacity**

- Invest in national arts and disability research.
- Improve national data collection on participation and workforce diversity.
- Ensure cultural policy is informed by disability-led research and lived experience.

## **Conclusion**

Australia's next National Cultural Policy presents an important opportunity to move beyond short-term inclusion initiatives toward long-term structural reform. With sustained investment, accountability and disability leadership, Australia can build a more accessible, ambitious and internationally connected cultural sector.

## **Contact**

Morwenna Collett  
Access Consultant

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