

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

Regional Council of Goyder

Short submission (text box 500 words or less).

The Regional Council of Goyder spans almost 7,000 square kilometres in country South Australia, with a population of just over 4,000 people. Our communities are dispersed, with significant distances between towns and properties, and there are no core social services operating from within the region. Like many rural councils, we operate with a small rate base and limited financial capacity.

Despite this, we recognise the vital role arts and culture play in sustaining regional communities. Council has partnered with Country Arts SA to employ an Arts and Cultural Facilitator, demonstrating our commitment to culture. We value the arts for their ability to create place, foster connection, support wellbeing, generate tourism, and celebrate and progress community identity.

First Nations First

We live and work on Ngadjuri Nation, a place that has experienced significant colonial violence, with few Ngadjuri people currently living on Country. Arts practice plays a critical role in cultural renewal and reconnection. We have seen the transformative impact of returning to Country on First Nations artists. Investment is needed in First Nations-led residencies on Country that support healing and cultural revitalisation. These must be flexible, individually designed, and supported by First Nations cultural leaders.

A Place for Every Story

A national policy must address the ongoing loss of regional artists to metropolitan centres. Investment in regional artist development — including residencies, mentorships, touring pathways, commissioning and networks — is essential to enable artists to remain in their communities. Cross-sector partnerships can embed arts practice within health, education, tourism and community development, strengthening local economies, wellbeing and cultural identity.

The Centrality of the Artist

Regional artists must be centred within their own communities. Touring models often position regional areas as passive recipients of culture, rather than recognising existing local expertise. While touring has value, it can be transactional. Regional artists are deeply connected to their communities and best placed to create relevant, meaningful work. Greater investment is needed in locally made work — arts created in the regions, by regional artists, for regional communities.

In regional artists, artists are the arts infrastructure

In the country, there is an urgent need for the joy, connection and participation that artists bring. Many artists also find themselves filling gaps left by limited social services and take on additional roles as community connectors, accidental counsellors and informal support systems. There is a huge demand for country artists to serve their community and fill the gaps however, artists receive little support in doing so. Regional artists are critical cultural infrastructure and must be supported to work safely and sustainably.

Engaging Communities

In regional contexts, a better word than 'audience' would be 'community'. We seek arts practice that is relational, embedded and responsive — work made for and with communities, prioritising care, connection and long-term impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the National Cultural Policy.