

22 May 2026

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development,
Communications, Sport and the Arts
Office for the Arts

Australia's Next National Cultural Policy

The Tim Fairfax Family Foundation (TFFF) welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the public consultation for *A new National Cultural Policy* for Australia.

This is an important moment for our nation: it will be the first time that Australians receive the benefits of consecutive national cultural policies. The Albanese government can take two related actions to maximise the impact of this achievement:

1. Develop the policy with a non-partisan lens, and
2. Deliver a 10-year policy for all Australians.

This next National Cultural Policy can provide immediate and much-needed support for artists and arts workers, while ensuring audiences' access to arts and cultural experiences. The appropriate policy settings can secure Australia's cultural infrastructure and industry for long-term, intergenerational benefits. The following submission details local opportunities and global examples of best practice to enable just that.

This submission is organised according to the five pillars of the current policy, *Revive*. With respect to each pillar, this submission:

- identifies the barriers to becoming a cultural powerhouse,
- details existing opportunities available to government to break down these barriers, and
- lists new actions for the inclusion in the next cultural policy.

This submission refers to and endorses the submissions of our colleagues at A New Approach, Alberts – The Tony Foundation, and Service and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA).

About the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation

The TFFF is a philanthropic foundation supporting rural, regional, and remote communities in Queensland and the Northern Territory. It was established in 2008 by Founder and Chairman Tim Fairfax AC, Gina Fairfax AC and Tim and Gina's daughters Sarah, Lucy, Fiona, and Prue. Since its creation, the Foundation has distributed \$90 million to community organisations with more than half of that directed to arts and cultural organisations.

Kind regards,



Dr Neal Harvey
CEO, Tim Fairfax Family Foundation

Pillar 1. FIRST NATIONS FIRST: reflecting First Nations priorities and supporting pathways for First Nations leadership across the cultural landscape.

The First Nations First priorities should be determined by Aboriginal and Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait Islander) peoples. Below, the TFFF has chosen to draw attention to First Nations-led-and-endorsed frameworks, plans, and existing government mechanisms through which progress towards the self-determined workforce priority may occur.

Barriers to Becoming a Cultural Powerhouse

- Still to be delivered Actions from *Revive*, including:
 - Developing a national First Nations Creative Workforce Development Strategy.

Existing Opportunities

- Amplify the remit of Creative Australia’s First Nations Board to:
 - invest in, create, and produce First Nations works of scale,
 - produce a First Nations workforce development strategy, and
 - promote best practice protocols and training across arts and cultural organisations.
- Embrace existing knowledge and efforts to progress workforce development:
 - Engage with the *First Nations Performing Arts Workforce Development Framework 2025-2030*,¹
 - Pursue undelivered actions relating to *Theme 2: Capacity Building* from the *National Indigenous Visual Arts Action Plan 2021-2025*, and
 - Progress the *Arts Workforce Plan* being developed by SaCSA.
- Coordinate the activity and output of Creative Australia’s First Nations Board with the activity and remit of:
 - Major Festivals Initiative,
 - National Performing Arts Partnership Framework organisations,
 - The Visual Art, Craft and Design Framework organisations, and
 - the Creative Futures Fund.

New Actions for Next Cultural Policy

- Review the *Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support Program* to:
 - Incentivise the training and employment of Art Centre Managers who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander,
 - Allow for the inclusion of cultural maintenance activities as eligible expenditure, recognising the importance of cultural knowledge and connection to an artist’s ability to work,
 - Increase the number of Indigenous Art Centres supported through multi-year agreements and include this information in government reporting, and
 - Administer funding for Art Centre travel and freight to national art fairs *in addition to* operational funding.

¹ <https://www.blakdance.org.au/workforcedevelopmentframework>

Pillar 2. A PLACE FOR EVERY STORY: recognising diverse forms of cultural expression and participation, including local and place-based practice and emerging modes of expression, while responding to changing patterns of participation and supporting inclusion.

Barriers To Becoming a Cultural Powerhouse

- Limited structures to support the effective coordination of cultural policy design and implementation across inter- and intra-governmental jurisdictions, and
- Deteriorating sense of ‘belonging’ and ‘trust’ across Australian communities.²

Existing Opportunities

- Leverage the Department of Home Affairs’ *Multicultural Framework Review* which recommends better connection across the three tiers of government, increasing participation in arts and culture, building cultural capability into public services, and meeting the specific needs of young people and regional communities,³
- Harness the comparatively high trust Australians have in libraries, museums, and art galleries as key delivery sites for cross government policy initiatives,⁴
- Further activate young Australians’ (18–34-year-olds) already active engagement with arts and culture to specifically address this cohort’s weakening sense of belonging,⁵ and
- Coordinate Regional Arts Fund activities with Creative Australia’s remit to better invest in community arts and cultural development organisations and activities.

New Actions for Next Cultural Policy

- Prioritise partnerships between democratic and cultural institutions to rebuild trust and prioritise cross-portfolio collaborations to address social cohesion,
- Support government entities across Australia to embed *Artist in Residence* programs into operations deploying creative solutions to local civic challenges,⁶ and
- Deliver this next National Cultural Policy as a whole-of-government policy with each department responsible for embedding this policy within its activities and reporting on progress towards actions delivered:
 - Each Minister to employ a Cultural Officer, responsible for connecting the departments within that Minister’s remit with the National Cultural Policy, and
 - Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to employ a Cultural Secretary responsible for coordinating the Cultural Officers.

² Alan Hui and Kate Fielding, *Belong, Trust, Connect: Policy opportunities for social cohesion through arts and culture*. Analysis Paper no.2025-07 (Canberra, Australia: A New Approach, March 2025).

³ <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/multicultural-framework-review>

⁴ Mark Evans and Ipsos Public Affairs (2021) *Guardians of our Civic Culture: What Museums Could and Should Do*, Council of Australasian Museum Directors.

⁵ Hui and Fielding, *Belong, Trust, Connect*.

⁶ Various examples of ‘Public Artist in Residence’ are presented by [Municipal Artists Partnerships](#).

Pillar 3. CENTRALITY OF THE ARTIST: responding to changing conditions for creative work, including safer and fairer workplaces, the protection of creative rights in the digital environment, and the role of arts education, creative skills and lifelong learning, and how creators are recognised across the broader economy.

Barriers To Becoming a Cultural Powerhouse

- Earning a living wage through creative practice is out of reach for most artists,⁷ and
- Prohibitively high barriers to arts and humanities education opportunities are exacerbating acute worker and skills shortages across Australia's entire economy.⁸

Existing Opportunities

- Learn from the Irish Government's *Basic Income for the Arts Scheme*: the cost benefit analysis provides evidence of strong fiscal and social return on such investment,⁹
- Engage with NSW Government's forthcoming *Art of Tax Reform Outcomes Report*,¹⁰ and
- Promote popular early childhood and life-long learning programs provided by Australian public libraries across all states and territories.¹¹

New Actions for Next Cultural Policy

- Research and pilot an Australian *Basic Income for the Arts Scheme*, applying learnings from the Irish model in the design and implementation,
- Adopt the opportunities to act on Australia's tax system as outlined by A New Approach:
 - Increase knowledge of existing tax concessions,
 - Create a national approach to arts and culture governance, and
 - Pursue clear, targeted, and stable tax reforms for the creative industries.¹²
- Collaborate with the Department of Education to identify and shift critical levers to strengthen Australia's arts education system, including:
 - Early childhood: partner with public libraries to further resource early childhood programs with professional artists.
 - Primary: support teachers through the provision of specialist Arts Teacher locums, particularly in small regional and remote schools.
 - Secondary: reform ATAR scaling with State and Territory bodies to reflect the critical learning capabilities stimulated through studying Arts and Humanities.
 - Tertiary: discontinue the Jobs-Ready Graduate Scheme and implement an equitable fee system for Arts and Humanities students.

⁷David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya (2024) *Artists as Workers: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*.

⁸Sandra Gattenhof and John Nicholas Saunders (2026), *The Polycrisis for Arts and Creative Education in Australia (2026)*. Australian Journal of Education, Volume 70, Issue 1.

⁹https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/b87d2659/20250929_BIA_CBA_Final_Report.pdf

¹⁰<https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/dciths/art-of-tax-reform-summit>

¹¹Australian Public Libraries Statistical Report 2023-2024.

¹²A New Approach (2025) *Building a legacy: Tax and the arts and culture system* Factsheet.

Pillar 4. STRONG CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE: how Australia’s cultural infrastructure remains resilient, adaptable, and fit-for-purpose, including how existing partnerships, investment, infrastructure and systems could be used more effectively to support long-term sustainability.

Barriers To Becoming a Cultural Powerhouse

- Preserving existing cultural infrastructure beyond the national collecting institutions, and
- Access to affordable creative workspaces (studios, office space, and venues) for artists and sector workers.

Existing Opportunities

- Learn from growing global movement on successful implementation of Creative Land Trusts, and leverage local progress being explored by City of Sydney in discussion with the NSW government.¹³

New Actions for Next Cultural Policy

- Expand Creative Australia’s impact investment mandate to include scoping the establishment of a National Cultural Land Trust, supported by tripartite government agreement, in partnership with the commercial property and philanthropic sectors.

¹³ A [Creative Land Trust](#) is a not-for-profit body that is established to secure land and property for use by the creative industries. These Trusts can maintain properties currently used by visual artists, musicians, and performers in perpetuity, as well as developing new mixed use creative spaces.

Pillar 5. ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE: responding to changing audience behaviours, discovery pathways and modes of engagement, including innovation in presentation and discovery to sustain participation, as well as marketing and distribution so Australian creativity continues to inspire, include, and connect.

Barriers To Becoming a Cultural Powerhouse

- Lowering financial barriers to participate in arts and cultural activities for Australians, while ensuring artists and cultural workers are remunerated appropriately for their work.

Existing Opportunities

- Explore initiatives like *Own Art*, which supports the visual arts and craft economy across the UK by providing member galleries with the facility to offer customers interest free, micro loans for the purchase of contemporary art and craft.¹⁴

New Actions for Next Cultural Policy

- Pursue Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) Salary Packaging (Sacrificing) reform.
 - Where employees take up a salary sacrificing package and make use of the “meal entertainment” FBT-exemption provision, update the definition of “meal entertainment” to include tickets to live performances and exhibitions presented by DGR-1 organisations.
 - Presently, this provision is available to employees in the following employment sectors:
 - public benevolent institution
 - health promotion charity
 - public or not-for-profit hospital
 - public ambulance service.¹⁵

Update access to this refreshed provision to include other public service and/or not-for-profit employees including not-for-profit education workers, Australian Defence Force personnel, etc.

¹⁴ <https://www.creativeunited.org.uk/services/own-art/>

¹⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03280/2021-07-01/text>.