

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am a [REDACTED]-based street dancer with 13 years in the local scene, specialising in locking — a style rooted in African American vernacular dance that emerged from the funk movement in 1970s Los Angeles. I train regularly, compete in battles, and am part of a community that has built something real with almost no institutional support.

Street dance is not a fringe activity. It has documented history, global reach, and deep roots in communities that are consistently underrepresented in arts funding — young people, culturally diverse communities, and LGBTQIA+ communities. In Sydney, the scene is active and self-sustaining. It is also chronically underfunded.

I am calling on the Australian Government to take four steps in the new National Cultural Policy.

Recognise street dance as legitimate cultural practice. Locking, breaking, waacking, popping and the broader family of street styles each have distinct histories and living communities. They should be named in policy — not absorbed into categories that erase what makes them distinct.

Create dedicated Street Dance funding. Dancers currently self-fund everything — training, events, spaces, travel. A dedicated funding stream through Creative Australia would let communities build sustainable programs and develop the next generation of practitioners.

Establish a Community Arts and Cultural Development body. Grassroots communities produce artists, mentors, event organisers and community leaders with no formal recognition. A dedicated body within Creative Australia that understands this model would be genuinely transformative.

Improve access to safe, affordable spaces. Dancers across Sydney navigate venue closures, inadequate floors, noise restrictions and the constant threat of being moved on. We need spaces with safe surfaces, shelter, lighting and transport access — where community can gather without being treated as a problem.

I have been part of this scene for 13 years. I have seen what it builds in people. None of it has come from government support — but it could go so much further with it.

If this policy is serious about every story having a place, then the stories being told in cyphers and battles across Sydney deserve to be part of that.