

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I write as a practising visual artist, an Associate Lecturer in Creative Arts, and a researcher into the role of arts and creative practice in supporting migrant and refugee communities in Lutruwita/Tasmania. This intersection of practice, teaching and research provides a grounded perspective on both the lived realities of sustaining an arts career and the broader social value of creative activity within communities. Pillar 2; This pillar must actively ensure that diverse voices are not only invited but protected. There is an emerging tension around censorship and the limits of expression that risks undermining the intent of this pillar. Artists often draw on lived experience, including trauma, displacement and marginalisation. These expressions may be uncomfortable, but they are vital to cultural understanding and social cohesion. Through my research with migrant and refugee communities, I have witnessed the transformative impact of creative practice as a mode of storytelling that transcends language barriers. For many participants, art enabled them to process their experiences and foster a sense of belonging in a new cultural context. Restricting such expression risks deepening division rather than encouraging dialogue and mutual understanding. A meaningful commitment to this pillar must include safeguarding artistic freedom, particularly for those whose voices are most often marginalised. Pillar 3; Despite rhetoric that positions artists at the centre of cultural life, this is not consistently reflected in working conditions or remuneration. Like many artists in Australia, I have navigated a career sustained through multiple forms of employment alongside my creative practice. This is not simply a personal challenge; it reflects systemic undervaluation of artistic labour. The arts contribute significantly to social capital, community wellbeing, and cultural identity. In my teaching role, I see how creative education fosters critical thinking, innovation, and problem-solving, skills essential beyond the arts sector. However, these contributions are not matched by equitable pay, secure career pathways, or sustained investment. To genuinely centre artists, the policy must address structural inequities, including fair pay standards, long-term funding models, and stronger protections for creative workers. Additionally, arts education must be supported across all levels, including renewed emphasis in primary schooling. Developing creative capacity is not ancillary, it is fundamental to preparing future generations for complex, rapidly changing environments. Pillar 4; The cultural sector continues to feel the impacts of COVID-19, with the closure of numerous creative spaces, organisations, and small businesses. This erosion of infrastructure limits both access to the arts and opportunities for artists to present work. Importantly, infrastructure must be considered beyond metropolitan centres. Regional contexts such as Lutruwita/Tasmania face distinct challenges, including limited funding access, geographic isolation, and fewer professional opportunities. A robust policy must address these disparities and support regionally embedded cultural ecosystems. There is also scope to think more expansively about infrastructure through cross-disciplinary engagement. The arts play a critical role in sectors such as health, where creative practice has demonstrated value in wellbeing and recovery contexts.