



National Cultural Policy submission

Tech Council of Australia

May 2026

1. Introduction

The Tech Council of Australia (TCA) is the peak body for Australia's technology sector, representing companies across the full lifecycle, from early-stage startups to large-scale global firms, as well as investors and tech-enabled businesses across the broader economy. Our members include Australia's leading digital platforms, creative technology companies, and the infrastructure providers that underpin the modern creative economy.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of Australia's new National Cultural Policy. Technology and culture are deeply intertwined. The tools, platforms, and networks that Australian technology companies have built — and that global technology platforms have deployed — have fundamentally transformed the conditions in which Australian artists and creators work, reach audiences, and earn income. A forward-looking cultural policy must reflect this reality.

The consultation paper notes that Australia's cultural and creative sector continues to evolve in a rapidly changing environment. The single greatest driver of that change over the past decade has been technology, delivering significant and measurable benefits to Australian creators.

New markets and income streams have opened at scale. Digital platforms have opened global doors for Australian visual artists and content creators who previously faced steep geographic barriers. YouTube has become a launchpad for creators like illustrator Jazza, who grew his art tutorial channel into a small business, and helped First Nations music artists like Tia Gostelow and A.B. Original build their audience base and develop their skills.

Canva pays creators to contribute templates that are available to other users, and for allowing their content to be used to train its AI models, setting aside \$200 million over three years to pay creators for contributing content to train its AI models. Similarly, Adobe pays creators for stock images.

On the institutional side, Creative Australia ran multiple rounds of digital enablement programs between 2021 and 2024, supporting 54 arts organisations with digital strategy coaching and offering emerging digital artists \$10,000 investments to develop new work.

Global platforms have democratised access to audiences. Previously, breaking into international markets required the backing of a major label, distributor, or broadcaster. Today, a musician in regional Queensland or a visual artist in suburban Perth can reach global audiences directly through digital platforms. This shift has lowered barriers to entry, reduced dependence on traditional gatekeepers, and enabled more diverse and independent voices to sustain creative careers.

The creator economy is a serious economic force. Digital platforms have delivered commercial outcomes to creators of the kind that cultural policy frameworks have historically struggled to deliver through direct intervention. They have largely emerged through the organic interaction between technology infrastructure and creative talent.

Technology has amplified the reach of Australian stories. Streaming and social platforms have enabled Australian content such as film, television, music, podcasts, gaming and visual art to travel beyond national borders at marginal cost. Australian creators are using these global platforms to find audiences that would previously have been inaccessible to them without substantial commercial infrastructure.

These benefits have emerged largely without direct government intervention in the technology sector. They reflect the commercial logic of platforms that rely on compelling content to attract audiences and advertisers, and the entrepreneurial ambition of Australian creators who have seized new opportunities. Cultural policy should acknowledge and seize this opportunity, rather than treating technology primarily as a source of risk.

Technology is providing new protections for creators. Technology provides the opportunity for creators to signal their preferences with respect to how their work is used, through standardised technical tools such as Content Credentials. These credentials are secure, tamper-evident metadata that travels with creative works across platforms and can include information about the creator, how the content was made, and the creators preferences regarding generative AI training and usage.

2. A Cultural Policy Fit for the Technology Era

The new National Cultural Policy is an opportunity to set a strategic direction for the next decade. That direction must be oriented toward the creative opportunities that technology makes possible. We offer the following considerations to guide that orientation.

Align cultural policy with the technology opportunity

The five pillars of Revive provide a strong foundation, and the TCA supports the intent to build on that framework. However, a policy designed for the next generation of Australian creatives must explicitly engage with the central role of technology in cultural production and distribution in the 21st century. Platforms, tools, and digital networks have become a vital aspect of the operating environment for Australia's creative sector.

The policy should affirm that enabling Australian creators to thrive on global technology platforms is a legitimate and important cultural objective. This means working with technology rather than against it to ensure that regulatory and policy settings do not inadvertently restrict the pathways through which technology has already delivered value to creators.

Equip the next generation of Australian creatives with technology skills

One of the greatest cultural policy challenges of the coming decade is ensuring that Australian creators are equipped to harness the full potential of the tools available to them. This includes:

- Digital literacy and platform skills, enabling creators to reach and build global audiences

- Familiarity with AI-assisted creative tools, which are rapidly transforming music production, visual arts, film, game design, and writing
- Business and data capabilities, allowing creators to understand how platforms work, how royalties are generated and distributed, and how to build sustainable careers in a digital-first environment
- Access to infrastructure, particularly for creators in regional and remote Australia, who should be able to participate in the digital creative economy on equal terms

Building digital creative skills are essential to the creation and dissemination of creative and artistic work in Australia and abroad, serving the goals of both supporting local culture and export competitiveness. Technology companies are willing and engaged partners in this work.

Get the regulatory settings right

Policy settings that affect the technology sector have direct consequences for Australian creators.

In particular, the TCA cautions against regulatory approaches that, in seeking to address legitimate concerns about market power or content standards, inadvertently remove access to opportunities for Australian creatives, reduce the economic returns flowing to Australian creators from technology platforms, or increase the friction involved in distributing and monetising Australian creative work globally. Well-designed regulation can protect creators; poorly designed regulation can harm them.

We encourage greater consideration of the impacts of digital regulatory proposals on the Australian creative industries and coordination across government to ensure alignment of objectives.

Recognise and support the intersection of technology and cultural production

Australian technology companies are themselves cultural producers. Australia's technology sector, which now contributes an estimated \$248.5 billion or 8.9% of GDP, is itself a major employer of creative talent – in game design, UX and interface design, digital content, animation, and creative technology. Cultural policy should recognise the technology sector as part of the creative economy, not separate from it.

The games industry, digital arts, immersive experiences, music technology, and creative software are all areas where Australian companies and individuals are generating internationally recognised work. A national cultural policy that does not include these sectors in its scope will fail to reflect the full breadth of Australian creative life and the future opportunities within this sector.

The TCA recommends that the new policy explicitly recognise technology-enabled cultural production as a priority area, and that relevant programs and support mechanisms be designed to include creators working at the intersection of technology and the arts.

3. Recommendations

The Tech Council of Australia recommends that the new National Cultural Policy:

- Prioritise coordinated digital infrastructure investment to ensure that creatives in Australia can access the digital tools necessary to create and distribute creative content, regardless of where they live.
- Acknowledge the role of technology as a key component of contemporary cultural production and distribution, and orient policy settings accordingly to build upon opportunity, and recognise technology-enabled cultural production as core to the creative economy.
- Invest in digital creative skills development for Australian artists and creators, in partnership with the technology industry and education sector.
- Ensure that proposed regulatory changes affecting the technology sector do not inadvertently reduce the cultural and economic opportunities available to Australian creators.
- Facilitate ongoing dialogue between the technology sector and the arts community to identify emerging opportunities and address emerging challenges collaboratively.