

National Cultural Policy Submission 2026

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Much of Australia's national cultural heritage is at imminent risk. Supporting Indigenous Two Way co-designed and co-delivered approaches and outcomes to mitigate further losses of remotely located Indigenous heritage is integral to Australia's shared identity. Although remotely located cultural conservation is critically unaddressed in Revive 2023, the care and management of Indigenous heritage remain a national responsibility and while art centres prioritise the care of this heritage, it often remains beyond their capacity and infrastructure. This gap highlights the urgent need for sustainable government and philanthropic investment models that support this heritage as a community-located economic and health asset. This submission will identify key challenges and opportunities within *Pillar 1: First Nations First*, *Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story*, and *Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist* to provide recommendations by identifying strong connections between Indigenous health, well-being, resilience and place-based cultural conservation practice.

Recommendations:

1. **Community research funding:** Fund Indigenous, remote community-led research to expand Indigenous health and well-being as a critically underdeveloped research area. This would support community health asset building and artworker development to bridge the equity gap in health research, employment, and higher education.
2. **Asset building and management:** Fund asset managers to work in community, alongside art centres to better understand the condition, value and use of their assets. Use this information to co-develop asset management strategies within strategic planning to connect with broader sector funding.
3. **Capability-based funding – assessment and implementation:** Develop a national remote, regional art centre capability-based funding assessment and implementation pilot. This would support established educational programs with non-for profit, partner, and philanthropic investors; enable a comprehensive assessment of art centre needs to improve real-world impact; and strengthen artworker pathways and infrastructure.

Challenge 1: Understanding Indigenous-led, place-based cultural conservation as a practice grounded in 65,000 + years of Indigenous Peoples rights with strong connection to identity, situates **conservation as a community-located health and well-being asset**. Strengthening this approach creates opportunities to identify the health value of Community Collections, Places in/on Country, and Indigenous Knowledge; expand remote art centre and community capital growth and asset valuation; inform future iterations of the Indigenous Art Centre Framework; and connect art centres to health sector funding.

Challenge 2: Strengthening national research strategies to **examine the intersections between Indigenous health, well-being, peoples and Country resilience, and cultural conservation practice** would enable greater *opportunities* to build capacity and capability of Indigenous-led research in an underdeveloped research area; enable deeper national commitment to Indigenous rights; align the revised national cultural policy with allied government policies and targets; and identify Indigenous priorities' to expand meaningful relevance and impact alongside remotely located communities.

Challenge 3: Strengthening sustainable pathways for cultural and creative practitioners by **supporting artworkers in their role as cultural conservators, creative agents, and facilitators of collective voice and cultural authority.** This develops *opportunities* for artworkers to understand their intellectual property investment capability; enable cultural conservation career pathways to support art centre infrastructure; and support the development of a national Indigenous cultural conservation workforce alongside the development of an Indigenous research workforce.

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