

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual

Boram Lee



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As an academic researching arts management, cultural policy and the career development of artists, I have long been interested in diversity, equity and inclusion in the arts and cultural sector. My work examines how cultural systems create, distribute and sustain opportunities, and how networks, institutions, funding systems and community relationships can either support or limit meaningful participation.

I believe the new National Cultural Policy should support arts for everyone. This means ensuring that all people can access arts and culture as audiences, and that all artists, regardless of their background, culture, colour, language, disability, age, class, postcode or career stage, can participate, create, lead and build sustainable careers.

Key issue

Cultural diversity is one of Australia's great strengths. It is also an asset for humanity because it brings people together, deepens mutual understanding and expands the stories, knowledge and creative practices through which communities make meaning. UNESCO also recognises cultural diversity as vital to dialogue, peace and sustainable development.

However, the value of cultural diversity cannot be fully realised if artists and communities do not have fair access to the structures that make cultural participation possible. While I welcome Revive and its commitment to A Place for Every Story, Centrality of the Artist and Strong Cultural Infrastructure, diversity and inclusion are still too often treated as visibility or representation.

Representation matters, but it does not fully address the deeper conditions that determine who can build an artistic career, who feels invited into cultural spaces, and whose communities are actively engaged as audiences. In Australia, audience development for multicultural communities has not been sufficiently developed. Many cultural organisations still focus on presenting diverse stories without investing enough in long term relationships with broader multicultural audiences.

My research shows that artists' career opportunities are strongly shaped by professional social capital. This includes referrals, endorsement, funding knowledge, producing support, mentoring, institutional introductions, peer networks, leadership pathways and access to decision making spaces. These relational resources are essential, but they are not evenly distributed.

What should change

The new National Cultural Policy should move from visibility to infrastructure. If Revive is to realise A Place for Every Story, it must ask who has the resources, relationships and authority to tell those stories, and who is supported to build audiences for them.

I recommend that Creative Australia recognise and fund relational infrastructure as a core part of cultural equity policy. This includes support for artist networks, community based arts organisations, cultural brokers, peer mentoring, producer development, leadership pathways and inclusive career navigation.

It should also include stronger investment in multicultural audience development, including community partnerships, multilingual communication, culturally responsive programming, affordable access, outreach and long term engagement with diverse communities. In short, arts for everyone must mean more than audience access. It must mean fair access to artistic careers, cultural leadership, decision making and meaningful cultural participation for all communities.

