

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I support the submission from Arts and Disability Network Australia (ADNA). I argue that the next iteration of the Revive National Cultural Policy must continue to recognise the significant role arts and disability culture plays in ensuring that arts and culture are accessible for all Australians.

Between 2023 and 2024, the cultural and creative industries contributed \$67.4 billion to the Australian economy. Ensuring accessibility for the more than 20% of Australians who identify as disabled is not just economic logic, participation in culture is a fundamental human right. Yet without access — to spaces, funding, decision-making and artistic opportunity — that right is denied. It is not just denied for Australians with disabilities, but for any Australian with access needs.

While Equity: The Arts and Disability Associated Plan (ADAP) initiated important change, a four-year policy is insufficient to fully realise the time-based structural transformation required to ensure that d/Deaf and disabled knowledge contributes to the design of a more equitable future for all Australians. Disability-led practice must be recognised as a driver of policy. Through Revive, our community have shown that our lived experience offers culturally relevant and previously unrecognised knowledge across all five pillars.

I support ADNA's recommendation that in the next National Cultural Policy, the government establish a dedicated sixth pillar, 'Access for all Australians,' to ensure that culture is fully accessible to as many people as possible. A pillar for access will strengthen First Nations cultural participation and leadership; ensure that everybody can access the spaces, conversations and information needed to create and share their stories; protect artists through safer, fairer and more accessible working conditions; embed accessibility into the design of venues, institutions and digital systems and expand audience participation and engagement across Australia by positioning access as the framework through which all cultural life becomes more innovative and inclusive.

Our contributions through Revive prove that arts and disability culture is not a discrete sector. It is a generative force with distinct creative methods, languages, and access practices that improve personal and collective wellbeing and initiate conversations that bring tangible benefits to the public.

To fully support these important contributions, ADNA argues that Australia's next iteration of the Revive National Cultural Policy should invest in a new Community and Cultural Development (CACD) Australia. This will ensure ADNA's communities as well as our CACD allies are supported across the entire policy framework. As Australia faces increasing social, environmental and economic crises, CACD must be recognised as a key component of essential cultural infrastructure.

Forming CACD Australia and recognising access as a sixth pillar acknowledges that the government recognises that access is not a subset of inclusion. Access is the condition that makes all other pillars possible — not just for the arts and disability community but for all Australians. Without access, there is no meaningful participation, no equitable workforce, no sustainable infrastructure, and no true reflection of Australia's cultural life.

I believe that Western Sydney must be acknowledged by the next cultural policy as a unique metropolitan area to receive equitable funding.