


National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

The Child Writes Fund Ltd (The Lighthouse Toowoomba)

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The Lighthouse Toowoomba welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Australia’s evolving National Cultural Policy.

As a regional organisation developed directly in response to community need, we urge the Federal Government to recognise and support “outside the box” cultural organisations whose work may not fit traditional arts funding models, but whose impact is profound, measurable, and deeply embedded within regional communities.

Regional Australia requires cultural infrastructure that reflects the realities of regional life. In many communities, organisations like ours operate across disciplines — combining literature, visual arts, education, wellbeing, youth engagement, intergenerational learning, community development, and social inclusion. These hybrid models are often born not from institutional design, but from necessity.

Current funding structures frequently privilege large-scale, metropolitan, or narrowly defined arts organisations. Yet some of the most innovative and community-responsive cultural work in Australia is occurring in regional areas where artists and organisations must adapt creatively to gaps in services, infrastructure, transport, education access, and social support.

The National Cultural Policy Revive identifies important pillars, and we believe these principles must extend beyond traditional institutions and actively include grassroots regional organisations that:

- respond directly to local community needs,
- build cultural participation from the ground up,
- create pathways for children and emerging artists,
- support mental wellbeing and social cohesion,
- and foster regional identity through storytelling and creative practice.

In regional communities, arts organisations are rarely “arts only.” They become educational spaces, gathering places, youth support networks, creative incubators, and catalysts for local economic activity.

Importantly, these organisations often operate with minimal infrastructure and unstable funding despite delivering substantial public value. This creates a cycle where regional innovation is celebrated rhetorically but remains under-resourced structurally.

Recent discussions around funding instability in regional galleries and arts organisations demonstrate the fragility of regional cultural ecosystems and the need for long-term policy settings that recognise community-led practice.

The Lighthouse Toowoomba recommends that the next National Cultural Policy:

- * establish dedicated funding pathways for cross-disciplinary and community-responsive regional organisations,
- * prioritise long-term operational support rather than short project cycles,
- * recognise the social, educational, and economic contributions of regional creative organisations,
- * and ensure regional communities are not assessed against metropolitan models of cultural delivery.

We describe this process in our book 'A Beautiful Book of Non-Negotiables' showing how a community can work in partnership across the sectors.

If Australia truly believes there should be “a place for every story, and a story for every place,” then policy must actively support the organisations creating those stories in regional communities every day. The future of Australian culture depends not only on flagship institutions, but on small, adaptive, community-driven organisations that nurture creativity where people live.