

Asialink National Cultural Policy Submission 2026



with local students, India exchange 2018

arts residency at Black Goat Studios, Yogyakarta, 2015

Background

[Asialink](#) is Australia's national centre for engagement with Asia, equipping Australia with the capability, connections and insights to thrive in our region. With expertise across arts and culture, business, education and diplomacy, our programs are shaping Australia's future with Asia. We increase cross-cultural understanding, create outcomes and build relationships. Our work foregrounds culturally diverse, diasporic and Indigenous perspectives in international engagement.

Context

In today's fragmented world shaped by humanitarian crises, AI and our global climate emergency, the geopolitical rise of Asia and changing demographics of Australian society means that engagement with Asia is critical to the success of Australia. The transdisciplinary model of Asialink offers lateral thinking, diverse perspectives and a holistic approach to addressing regional issues and providing actionable advice.

[Chapter 12: Creative Industries](#) of 'Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040' identifies creative industries as a strategic area for two-way cultural and economic engagement and calls for greater government investment. Similarly, World Economic Forum's [Growth in the New Economy: Towards a Blueprint](#) predicts 'media, entertainment and sport' as the eighth industry growth area over the next five years globally.

Key recommendations

1. Pillar 1: First Nations First

- **Recognition of Australia-Asia First Nations history:** Recognise deep pre-colonial connections between First Nations Australia and Asia.
- **First Nations international capacity building:** Support Indigenous organisations to manage international projects and partnerships.
- **First Nations reciprocity:** Prioritise Indigenous led exchanges between First Nations people in Australia and the Asia Pacific.

2. Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story

- **Elevate diaspora:** Prioritise leadership pathways for Australian diaspora communities to address systemic underrepresentation.
- **Shape our national identity:** Offer funding and initiatives that help shape our national identity as a socially cohesive, multicultural society.
- **Cultural intelligence training:** Invest in service providers like Asialink to deliver cultural intelligence training to enhance relationships and outcomes.

3. Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist

- **Invest in reciprocity:** Cultural exchange must be an equal partnership supporting mutual benefit for artists and communities across the region.
- **Fair artist remuneration:** Follow Ireland/Finland/Canada's trial of Basic Income for the Arts which resulted in increased national economic return.

4. Pillar 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure

- **International multi-year investment:** Partnerships with Asia are built by earning trust and require time to develop and flourish.
- **Streamline visa pathways:** Negotiate bilateral cultural mobility agreements with regional partners to reduce barriers to international exchange.
- **International capacity building:** Invest in service providers like Asialink to deliver international capacity-building training to organisations and artists.
- **Creative industries import/export:** Research and develop specific creative industries import/export initiatives to enhance bilateral relations.

5. Pillar 5: Engaging the Audience

- **Digital infrastructure:** Invest in multilingual content and accessible design to allow hybrid programming to reach regional audiences.
- **Research and evaluation:** Fund longitudinal research on the impact of cultural exchange and international engagement.
- **Community co-design:** Prioritise community consultation and co-design to adhere to cultural protocols and ensure relevance.