

SUBMISSION to the NEW NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY 2026

Moogahlin Performing Arts is a leading self-determined First Peoples company, providing essential platforms to centre First Peoples stories in Australia's arts and culture. We exist to develop and produce distinctive new performance work by First Peoples, for First Peoples. We:

- ❖ Make places for diverse First Peoples stories through enabling creative development of new works.
- ❖ Support and celebrate First Peoples artists, in their roles as creators, performers, crew and producers by providing work and professional development opportunities that build successful, fulfilling careers.
- ❖ Establish the infrastructure for presenting works by First Peoples, through sourcing partnerships with peer organisations, stakeholders and venues.
- ❖ Build audiences and opportunities for First Peoples stories, through local, regional, national and international presentation.

These pillars of Australia's National Cultural Policy matter, because First Peoples performing arts fosters connection to Culture, expands knowledge of history, and strengthens social and emotional wellbeing.

Moogahlin's work aligns with the Policy across five major project areas:

Baiame's Ngunnhu Festival and our regional program of arts, culture and language through workshops and performance, centred on Ngemba and Murrawarri country in remote northwest NSW.

Yellamundie Festival, for the creative development and presentation of new theatre-based works by First Peoples from across Australia. In 2026-2027, Moogahlin's program encompasses four Yellamundie Festival alumni works : international touring of *The Visitors* (Jane Harrison, Murawari), a 10-venue regional NSW tour of *The Last Shot* (Troy Russell, Biripi/Gamillaroi), presentation of *Healing Scars* (Warren Mason, Yuwaalaraay), and final development and premiere of *Imigo* (Jacob Boehme, Narunnga/Kaurna).

Koori Gras Divas, boosting visibility of queer Black pride and talent for Black queer and questioning people in regional communities where there is otherwise very limited (or no) access to these stories and celebration through drag artistry.

Workforce Development, an initiative supported by Creative Australia, to create pathway roles on each of our projects for First Peoples at junior, emerging and developing levels across directing, producing, production, stage management and more.

International First Nations cultural engagement and creative collaboration. We build deep, long-standing relationships with First Nations performing arts organisations and artists in Aotearoa (New Zealand) and North Turtle Island (Canada), connecting through exchanging culture and performance.

Moogahlin collaborates closely with First Peoples performing arts companies across Australia, including through participation in the **First Nations Performing Arts Companies** network (FNPAC) and the **Blak Futures Collective**. We work directly with a wide range of independent First Peoples arts practitioners, through project engagements across our annual programming.

This submission emerges from and draws on the priorities identified through the broader collective First Nations-led framework currently being developed across sector organisations. It endorses and sits proudly alongside the various separate submissions from the FNPAC and Blak Futures Collective. Moogahlin acknowledges the contributions of all participating companies, and joins the call for policy actions recommended there, including:

Artist and workforce development, including

- ❖ funding for a national First Peoples performing arts workforce study to inform a coordinated workforce development strategy to build capacity
- ❖ investment in First Peoples-led training infrastructure for theatre performance and production and in training and mentorship programs and leadership development pathways
- ❖ diverse support options for independent creatives and producers and emerging companies.

Operational sustainability and development, including

- ❖ longer-term operational investment for self-determined First Nations organisations
- ❖ pathways from project funding to long term sustainability and institutional growth
- ❖ investment in First Nations-led cultural infrastructure (venues, cultural hubs and facilities)
- ❖ First Nations-led commissioning systems and creation pathways
- ❖ greater alignment across government (arts, education, foreign affairs, tourism, employment)
- ❖ embedded First Nations First systems, protocols and processes
- ❖ improved incentives for donations to the arts.

International cultural diplomacy and creative exchange, including

- ❖ implementation funding for the Tri-Nations Indigenous transnational strategy
- ❖ dedicated First Nations-led international market development within Creative Australia.

Key challenges

- ❖ Supporting independent creatives through the early stages of transitioning stories from ideas to expression
- ❖ Developing workforce capability, capacity and sustainability
- ❖ Providing regional-remote creatives and audiences with better facilities, expertise and opportunities, where cultural scale may not align with audience scale and revenue
- ❖ Establishing and building diverse income streams to achieve growth.

Key opportunities for the new National Cultural Policy

- ❖ **First Peoples workforce development** through direct artist support, investment in training infrastructure and pathways, and a coordinated framework based on a comprehensive study into the sector.
- ❖ **Regional and remote First Peoples arts and culture** reprioritised and expanded to further increase support through funding and strategic programs and infrastructure investment that provides systems and resources as well as buildings and facilities.
- ❖ **International interest in the stories of Australian First Peoples** recognised for its important value in both cultural diplomacy and creative collaboration, and supported with dedicated strategy and investment in market development and First Peoples touring and engagement projects.

Alignment with sector

This should be read alongside the following submissions from the First Nations Performing Arts Companies and Blak Futures Collective:

Overarching Blak Futures and FNPAC
Self-determined First Nations performing arts organisations
First Nations theatre
First Nations dance
Indigenous intercultural
First Nations leadership in non-Indigenous organisations

“The work is already happening. The systems must now match it.”

Moogahlin’s submission is also supported by:

Arts on Tour
Abbie-Lee Lewis
Amy Flannery
Karen Norris
Munk Funk Productions