

Submission for the REVIVE arts policy review

Why we need to embed climate action across all parts of REVIVE

To whom it concerns,

I am writing this submission because I strongly believe we need to put climate action and environmental care right at the middle of the REVIVE policy. At the moment, arts and culture are treated like something separate from the real world, but they are actually essential infrastructure for helping our communities prepare for, survive, and recover from climate disasters. With the way the weather is going in Australia now with the fires and floods, this is definately something the government needs to fix.

Climate change is increasing how often these disasters happen across Australia, and it is putting a massive strain on our local communities. These impacts arent just environmental or economic, they are deeply social too. It affects how people get along, their wellbeing, and how long it takes a town to get back on its feet. The evidence always shows that communities with strong cultural and social connections recover much faster, but our current funding and frameworks dont properly recognize or resource the arts to do this important work. Embedding climate into REVIVE is a huge opportunity to change this.

Dealing with climate change is a cultural challenge just as much as an environmental one. We need big changes in human behaviour, values, and our collective imagining of the future. This is exactly what artists and community arts programmes do best. By recognising this, Australia would line up with international groups like UNESCO who are already pushing for culture to be at the heart of climate action at the COP meetings.

Climate action shouldn't just be a single checkbox on a form. It needs to be part of the everyday creative decisions that happen on the ground. It should affect how artists are trained, how things are made, where we source materials from, and what kind of stories we tell. For REVIVE to work properly, the policy needs to support what is actually happening in real life, led by local artists and communities.

Here are the main things we are asking for across all parts of the policy:

- Look at everything through a climate lens: Make the climate crisis and respect for nature a core part of all five pillars.
- First Nations leadership: Give proper respect and funding to First Nations knowledge systems, as they are central to land care and adaptation.
- Essential infrastructure: Formally recognise that arts and culture are critical for community resilience and recovery after a disaster.
- Bringing people together: Use arts and shared stories to heal the social divisions that are being caused by the climate emergency.

- Smart funding and grants: Build climate risk and low-carbon practices into how cultural grants are handled and judged.
- Help people innovate: Support creative research and low-carbon art projects so we can find new ways to respond to the crisis.
- Ethical funding standards: Make sure that public cultural investments and where institutions get their money align with national climate goals so there's no conflict of interest.

The main shift we need to see is moving away from just seeing culture as a passive 'contributor' to climate goals, and start seeing it as a real leader for climate resilience in Australia. Thankyou for reading my submission.

David Robinson
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