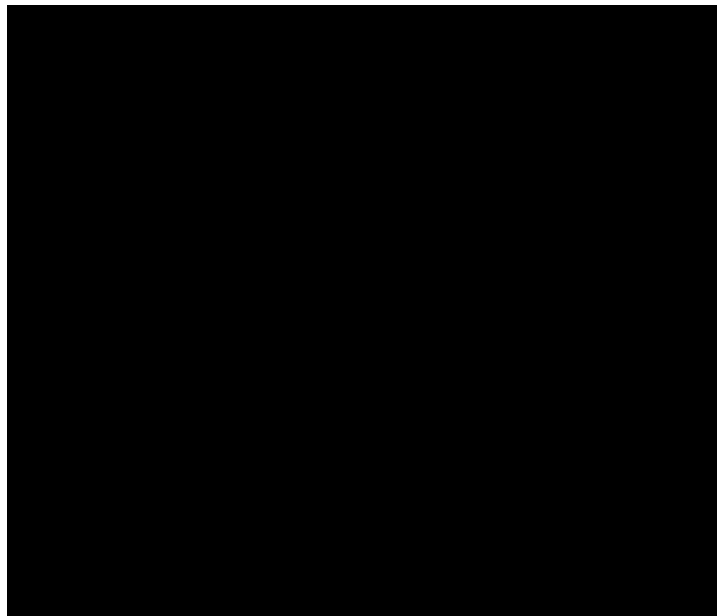




ClimActs Submission to the REVIVE Review

23 May 2026

Dear Minister Burke,

I am an active contributor to both ClimActs and CLIMARTE. Established in 2013, [ClimActs](#) is a Melbourne based Climate Justice performance collective. Its leading act, the Climate Guardians made global headlines in Paris during COP21. I am a passionate young person who has been active in researching the cross-section of creative arts and climate policy discourse. I recently led a [research project](#) on the role of art in helping people to deal with the reality of the climate crisis through creative expression, which was informed by my experience as an active contributor to both ClimActs and CLIMARTE.

ClimActs is a member of the Creative Climate Action Alliance (CCAA), a national coalition of artists, collectives, organisations, peak bodies and cross-sector leaders mobilising the cultural sector to play a formal role in Australia's climate response.

Our collective approach seeks to integrate place-based creative climate action with First Nations leadership and social justice principles of care, access and equity, positioning arts and culture as essential infrastructure for climate adaptation, community resilience and regenerative futures.

Through our cross-sector relationships, we identify shared priorities for action, investment and creative practice led responses. Our work embeds culture and the arts within climate policy, public discourse and on-the-ground action - bringing together industry leaders to develop practice pathways for transition. We position arts and culture as central to Australia's global climate leadership—linking international commitments to community action, First Nations knowledge and cultural transformation.

Key Recommendations (Summary)

We call for climate to be embedded as a cross-cutting imperative across all pillars of REVIVE - positioning arts and culture as essential infrastructure for climate adaptation, community resilience and regenerative futures. Not as an add-on pillar, but as an organising principle that strengthens the existing framework.

In doing so we recommend that the new policy:

- Embed First Nations cultural knowledge systems as foundational components of national climate adaptation and land stewardship (Pillar 1)
- Establish dedicated funding streams for place-based climate storytelling and embed creative practice within disaster preparedness and recovery systems (Pillar 2)
- Introduce funding incentives and training to support low-emissions creative models and build climate literacy across the sector (Pillar 3)
- Require cultural infrastructure to operate as climate-resilient community assets - aligned to net zero targets and embedded within regional preparedness and recovery networks (Pillar 4)
- Integrate climate engagement into audience development frameworks, strengthening public participation, climate literacy and community resilience (Pillar 5)
- Position arts and culture within Australia's international climate leadership, including formal integration into engagement with the Conference of the Parties (COP) and related global processes—strengthening public accountability, amplifying First Nations leadership, and connecting global commitments to community action (Cross-Pillar)
- Establish ethical funding and governance standards to ensure alignment between public cultural investment, institutional integrity and national climate objectives (Cross-Pillar)

The case for this is clear. In “2023–24, Australia’s cultural and creative sector contributed \$67.4 billion to the economy and employed over 591,000 people.”¹ A significant portion of this workforce is already engaging with climate themes, communities and challenges. Policy recognition would formalise and amplify what practitioners are already doing.

This approach aligns with national priorities across climate adaptation, disaster resilience, regional development and social cohesion. This requires not only new investment and practice, but strengthened governance and funding integrity to ensure the sector’s leadership in climate action is credible, independent and aligned with the public interest.

Climate change is not only an environmental challenge, but a cultural one—requiring shifts in values, behaviours and collective imagination. Arts and culture are uniquely positioned to translate complex climate science into lived experience, enabling public engagement, behaviour change and community-led adaptation.

The best way to protect Australia’s economy from energy supply shocks as well as extreme climate events which disproportionately burden vulnerable communities is to hasten the pace of the transition to renewable and regenerative alternatives. However, instead of increasing support for the transition, the 2026-2027 budget has withdrawn funding for climate and clean energy initiatives. So, while more than \$19 billion in annual fossil fuel tax loopholes and subsidies continue to flow to the very corporations causing the interconnected global climate, biodiversity and inequality crises, all Australian communities will be further harmed.²

Climate impacts are already reshaping communities across Australia. Human-driven warming—now approximately 1.5–1.8°C above pre-industrial levels—is intensifying extreme events including heatwaves, floods, droughts and fire weather³. These impacts are compounding, with overlapping disasters placing sustained pressure on communities, ecosystems and infrastructure. Without rapid action, the social, economic and environmental consequences will escalate. Public concern is

¹ Australian Government, *Towards a new National Cultural Policy: Public Consultation Paper*, Office for the Arts, March 2026, p. 5.

² Climate Council Media Release, *\$19bn Budget Free Kick for Fossil Fuel Industry*, 12 May 2026
<https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/19bn-budget-free-kick-for-fossil-fuel-industry/>

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2022, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
CSIRO 2022, *Climate change impacts in Australia*, viewed at: <https://www.csiro.au>

strong with approximately 70–80% of Australians expressing concern about climate change and supporting stronger, evidence-based government action.⁴

Global research and policy frameworks increasingly recognise that climate action is fundamentally a human challenge, shaped by values, behaviours and collective meaning-making. Cultural practice plays a central role in enabling understanding, engagement and change.⁵ Cultural participation builds social cohesion, trust and belonging—key determinants of a community’s capacity to adapt and respond to disruption. Around the world, arts and culture are already contributing to disaster risk reduction, biodiversity protection and climate adaptation, often grounded in local and First Nations knowledge systems.⁶

Embedding climate across REVIVE would align Australia with international movements such as Culture at COP⁷, positioning the nation to lead in integrating cultural practice into climate adaptation and resilience strategies. Arts and culture play a unique role in translating complex climate science into lived, emotional and collective understanding—supporting behaviour change, empathy, stewardship and public engagement.

Crucially, climate action in arts and culture is not a discrete policy objective— it is shaped by human values and culture and is enacted through everyday creative decisions: how artists are trained, how work is made, how materials are sourced and circulated, and how stories are told. For REVIVE to be effective, climate-responsive policy must both support and be informed by this on-the-ground practice—iterative, lived, and led by artists and communities.

Embedding climate across all pillars of REVIVE positions arts and culture as essential to resilience and preparedness—not only in policy, but in practice—supporting communities not only to respond to disruption, but to imagine and enact new ways of living.

Climate and Ecological Crisis as a Cross-Cutting Cultural Imperative (All Pillars)

Position climate, ecological crisis and respect for the living world as a core organising lens across all five pillars, not a peripheral issue.

Leverage the creative sector’s role in imagining and enabling new futures.

To remain fit-for-purpose, REVIVE must position climate, ecological crisis and respect for the living world as a **core organising lens across all five pillars**. Evolving to recognise culture not only as an economic and social asset, but as critical infrastructure for climate adaptation, community resilience and regenerative futures.

This requires the following system-level changes:

- Embed First Nations cultural knowledge systems and leadership as core to national climate adaptation and land stewardship;
- Recognise arts and culture as essential to community resilience, social cohesion and recovery, already identified as core outcomes of REVIVE;

⁴ The Australia Institute 2023, *Climate of the Nation 2023: Tracking Australia’s attitudes towards climate change and energy*, The Australia Institute, Canberra

Lowy Institute 2024, *Lowy Institute Poll 2024: Climate change and energy*, Lowy Institute, Sydney

Climate Council 2023, *Survey results: Climate-fuelled disasters and community concern*, Climate Council of Australia Ltd, Sydney

⁵ World Cities Culture Forum 2021, *Culture and Climate Change (5th Edition)*, World Cities Culture Forum, London

XZheng et al, Consideration of culture is vital if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, *One Earth*, Volume 4, Issue 2, 2021, p307-319

⁶ https://pec.ac.uk/blog_entries/culture-community-resilience-and-climate-change-becoming-custodians-of-our-planet/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

⁷ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/culture-cop30>

- Invest in artists as agents of systems change, shaping narratives of transition, adaptation and regeneration;
- Embed climate risk, adaptation and mitigation into policy delivery, funding criteria and evaluation;
- Acknowledge the Climate Emergency and intersecting crises as causes of social division and unrest, where centring arts and culture in climate mitigation and transition plans contributes to social cohesion and unifying Australian stories of better futures;
- Address the current policy gap where climate is minimally referenced despite escalating impacts;
- Fund cross-sector collaboration and creative research, utilising low carbon creative skills and practices, to develop and explore new climate responses; and
- Align with global climate movements—position Australia’s cultural sector as a leader in connecting culture to the natural world, climate storytelling and innovation.

Policy Shift: From culture as “contributor” → culture as **leader for climate resilience**

Global Climate Leadership and COP Engagement

At COP30 “culture moved decisively onto the global climate agenda”, featuring as Objective 19 under Pillar 5 on fostering human and social development, one of the [30 objectives of the Action Agenda](#).⁸

Australia has a critical opportunity to deepen its leadership within global climate processes, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP), by recognising culture and the arts as essential to climate action.

While national engagement has traditionally focused on scientific, economic and policy domains, international frameworks increasingly recognise that effective climate action depends on values, behaviours and public participation—areas in which arts and culture play a central role.

Embedding culture within Australia’s COP engagement would:

- Strengthen national accountability by connecting global commitments to lived community experience
- Position Australia as a leader in integrating culture into climate policy, adaptation and resilience strategies
- Amplify First Nations knowledge and cultural leadership on the global stage
- Showcase innovative, place-based approaches to climate adaptation, disaster recovery and regenerative practice
- Build stronger international cultural partnerships and knowledge exchange

Policy Actions:

- Formally recognise arts and culture within Australia’s COP and international climate engagement strategies.
- Support representation of artists and cultural leaders within national delegations and associated programs.
- Establish a national cultural program aligned with COP processes, showcasing Australian leadership in creative climate action.
- Invest in international cultural exchange and collaboration to strengthen Australia’s role in culture-led climate responses.
- Align with global initiatives such as Culture at COP to ensure Australia remains connected to emerging international frameworks.

⁸ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/culture-cop30>

This represents not only an opportunity for international leadership, but a mechanism for deepening climate responsibility across the nation—ensuring that commitments made on the global stage are understood, owned and enacted by communities at home.

Policy Shift:

From climate diplomacy as technical negotiation → climate leadership as cultural, social and collective transformation

Ethical Alignment, Governance and Funding Integrity

Recognise that the cultural sector's capacity to lead on climate action is shaped not only by its creative output, but by the integrity of its governance, funding relationships and institutional partnerships.

- Acknowledge growing sector concern regarding funding relationships and governance affiliations that may be misaligned with national climate goals and public interest outcomes;
- Recognise the reputational, cultural and policy risks where associations with industries or networks that contribute to climate harm may undermine public trust, distort cultural narratives, or weaken the sector's role in climate leadership;
- Establish clear ethical funding and sponsorship principles aligned with Australia's climate commitments, environmental responsibility and social cohesion objectives;
- Introduce transparency measures for major philanthropic contributions, sponsorships and board affiliations within publicly funded cultural organisations;
- Embed conflict of interest and governance safeguards to ensure that cultural institutions can operate free from undue or misaligned influence; and
- Support organisations to transition toward values-aligned funding models through capacity building, diversification strategies and long-term investment approaches.

Policy Shift:

From neutral acceptance of all funding sources → values-aligned, transparent and accountable cultural investment ecosystems

1. First Nations First

Recognising and respecting the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia's arts and culture

Climate Deepening Focus:

Embed First Nations knowledge as foundational to climate response, care for Country, and regenerative futures.

Embed climate literacy, ethical practice and care frameworks across the sector.

Policy Inserts:

- Embed First Nations cultural knowledge systems as core to national climate adaptation and land stewardship.
- Invest in First Nations-led cultural practices that model regenerative relationships with Country and kin (all living things).
- Invest in cultural exchange and collaboration with First Nations people through developing greater awareness and articulation of the cultural values of non-Indigenous civil society
- Centre Indigenous governance and leadership in climate and disaster frameworks.
- Support intergenerational knowledge transfer as a climate resilience strategy – embed First Nations-led cultural practice in education settings from early childhood to tertiary.

Policy Shift: From recognition of First Nations culture → First Nations leadership in ecological and cultural regeneration

2. A Place for Every Story

Reflecting the breadth of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture

Climate Deepening Focus on place-based climate impacts and connection to the Natural World:

Position storytelling as a driver of connection to culture, place and community in a rapidly changing world. *Building climate awareness, behaviour change and future imagining for all Australians, while recognising First Nations cultures and knowledge as foundational to understanding and caring for the lands and waters we share.*

Position artists and cultural organisations as essential actors in climate adaptation and disaster systems.

Policy Inserts:

- Establish funding for place-based climate storytelling reflecting diverse lived experiences of environmental change and disaster to support community-led cultural processes that enable trauma recovery and collective meaning-making.
- Fund place-based climate education for creatives, including ecological literacy and adaptation skills.
- Support artists to shape public understanding and emotional engagement with climate realities in projects that reframe sustainable futures and collective responsibility.
- Embed creative practice in disaster preparedness, response and long-term recovery frameworks.
- Ensure climate narratives include regional, remote and frontline communities.

Policy Shifts:

From centralised representation → mobilising local cultural narratives and communities for systems change

From reflecting generic homogenised society → actively redesigning future systems and values that are informed by conditions in the natural world

3. The Centrality of the Artist

Supporting artists to create great art and be sustainable.

Deepening Focus on individual artists skills that can respond to climate:

Grow Creative Climate leadership through new ways of working.

Enable artists to lead low-carbon, ethical, place-based and regenerative creative practices.

Policy Inserts:

- Fund and support artists to adopt climate-conscious practices (materials, production, touring).
- Provide incentives for low-emissions creative production and touring models.
- Reframe festivals, touring and cultural tourism as climate-conscious regenerative systems, not extractive ones.
- Recognise and fund artists as creative, collaborative leaders in climate education, engagement and innovation.
- Advocate for the central role of artists in aligned policy frameworks, including National Adaptation Strategy and National Health and Climate Strategy

Policy Shifts:

From sustainability of artists in an extractive economy → artists as leaders of sustainable and regenerative systems

From carbon intensive mobility driven growth → distributed, locally-anchored creative ecologies

4. Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts and culture.

Climate Deepening Focus:

Reimagine infrastructure as climate-responsive, community-embedded and resilience-building.

Position artists and cultural organisations as essential actors in disaster systems.

Policy Inserts:

- Embed climate adaptation and mitigation into all cultural infrastructure planning and investment.
- Transition venues and institutions toward net zero and regenerative design principles aligned with national emissions targets.
- Support and fund the positioning of cultural infrastructure as hubs for social activation, disaster preparedness, response and recovery.
- Strengthen and fund regional and local networks to support place-based resilience and coordination.
- Align cultural tourism funding and strategy with national emission reduction targets and regenerative practice standards.
- Embed ethical funding and governance standards within cultural infrastructure investment frameworks, ensuring alignment with national climate and environmental targets.
- Require transparency and disclosure of major funding sources and governance affiliations for organisations receiving public investment.
- Develop sector-wide guidelines to support institutions in identifying and managing conflicts of interest, particularly where funding relationships may be inconsistent with climate and social policy objectives.
- Incentivise and support the transition toward diversified, values-aligned funding models that strengthen institutional independence and public trust.

Policy Shifts:

From static infrastructure defined by institutions → adaptive, creative and regenerative community infrastructure

From reactive recovery that reinforce hierarchical systems → embedded, local and relational preparedness systems

5. Engaging the Audience

Making sure our arts and culture are accessible and valued by all Australians

Climate Deepening Focus:

Engage audiences as active participants in creative practice, climate awareness, preparedness and community care.

Policy Inserts:

- Build public climate literacy through arts and cultural engagement.
- Develop sector-wide frameworks for ethical, trauma-informed and relational ways of working in climate-impacted contexts.
- Support and fund participatory projects that strengthen social cohesion and collective resilience.
- Ensure equitable access to cultural engagement for climate-impacted communities.
- Foster and fund long-term engagement beyond project cycles to support long-term recovery and adaptation.
- Connect public engagement with Australia's international climate commitments, including COP processes, through cultural programs that translate global ambition into local understanding, participation and action.

Policy shifts:

From focus on access → active participation in resilient, climate-aware creative communities

From creative skills development → values-led, care-centred cultural leadership

Embedding climate as a cross-cutting principle within REVIVE ensures the policy remains fit-for-purpose in a time of accelerating environmental and social change. The cultural sector is already undertaking this work. With strategic policy alignment, Australia has an opportunity to lead locally and globally—positioning arts and culture as essential infrastructure for climate adaptation, resilience and regenerative futures.

This approach aligns directly with national priorities across climate adaptation, disaster resilience, regional development and social cohesion, and ensures that cultural policy contributes meaningfully to Australia's long-term future.

Climate leadership is not only measured by targets and policy, but by a nation's ability to engage its people in the work of transformation—connecting global ambition to local action through culture, creativity and shared responsibility.

ClimActs aligns its recommendations in collaboration with:

Creative Climate Action Alliance Submission (from which our submission largely draws)

[Community Arts and Cultural Development Submission](#)

[Arts and Health Submission](#)

[Creative Climate submission](#)

Yours faithfully,

Ruby Buick
Committee Member

[ClimActs](#)

