

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the redevelopment of the National Cultural Policy. It is vital that Australia continues to have a national strategy that recognises the arts as central to our cultural identity, economy, and international reputation.

My name is [REDACTED] and I am an [REDACTED]-born actor and producer who has just returned to [REDACTED] after being in London for a year. I trained at the [REDACTED] in SA and have worked with companies including Belvoir St Theatre, Australian Shakespeare Company and Sydney Theatre Company. Alongside performing, I have independently produced theatre and screen projects, including original reworkings of classical texts designed to create opportunities for emerging artists.

Like myself, many Australian artists leave to pursue opportunities overseas because there are clearer pathways, stronger investment, and more sustainable systems abroad. I decided to return to Australia after being in London as the artists here are strong and I want to contribute to our vibrant scene - However, I do have hesitation as I know the artistic scene in Australia is quite lacking in opportunities compared to the UK or the US.

Like many freelance artists, a significant amount of independent theatre work relies on unpaid or severely underpaid labour. Emerging artists are often expected to self-produce, self-fund, market their own work, and take on administrative roles without any real financial stability. The cost of rehearsal venues, accommodation while touring or relocating for work, and the lack of secure artistic employment pathways make it difficult for artists to remain in Australia long-term.

I strongly support policies that place the “Centrality of the Artist” at the core of the next cultural policy. In particular, I support the proposed Artists at Work pilot program and the creation of more hybrid artistic/administrative employment pathways. Sustainable artistic careers cannot rely solely on short-term contracts and unpaid development periods. Artists need long-term training, upskilling, and stable employment models.

I also support the proposal to “fund art like sport” through a 10-year National Arts and Culture Strategy. Australia has strong systems for identifying and supporting sporting talent from grassroots to elite professional levels, but the arts sector lacks the same long-term pipeline. Investing in the arts as national infrastructure would strengthen career pathways, retain Australian talent, and allow artists to represent Australia internationally while still maintaining meaningful ties to the local industry.

Additionally, affordable accommodation and rehearsal venues are becoming one of the biggest barriers to independent work. Leveraging pre-existing government-owned spaces and creating rental subsidy schemes for artists would make an enormous difference to the sustainability of the sector.

Australia produces extraordinary artists, but too many are forced into burnout, pursuing work overseas, or leaving the industry entirely. A renewed National Cultural Policy should focus on creating sustainable careers so artists are able not only to emerge, but to remain, grow, and return to contribute to Australian cultural life long-term.