

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

BEAT ENTERTAINMENT

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is Samuel Gaskin and I am the Managing Director of BEAT Entertainment — a queer, First Nations, multicultural-led entertainment company creating work across music, theatre, live events, and community engagement. Through our work, we aim to create spaces where people feel seen, connected, celebrated, and reminded of their humanity.

I'm excited to contribute to this consultation because I deeply believe Australia's cultural sector is not a luxury — it is essential infrastructure for identity, truth-telling, social cohesion, wellbeing, and economic growth.

At the same time, I have been devastated to watch some of the most talented artists, producers, performers, and creative workers in this country leave the sector simply because they cannot afford to survive. People are burning out. They are choosing between paying rent, feeding their children, or continuing to create work that uplifts communities and contributes enormously to Australia's cultural life.

I consider myself and BEAT Entertainment among the lucky ones. We have built nationally recognised work, toured productions, created employment opportunities, and centred queer, First Nations, and multicultural communities in everything we do — and even then, sustaining a career in the arts often feels incredibly fragile.

Australia cannot continue expecting artists to carry the emotional, cultural, and social labour of this country while living in ongoing financial insecurity.

I believe the next National Cultural Policy must include a stronger commitment to artists as workers. This includes better support for freelance income instability, parents and carers in the arts, accessible arts education, and arms-length funding structures protected from political interference. Artists deserve the dignity, security, and long-term investment afforded to other essential industries.

I also believe we should be looking internationally at successful models that value artists as vital contributors to society. Ireland's Basic Income for the Arts pilot demonstrated how direct investment in artists creates stronger creative output, greater sustainability, and positive economic and social returns. Australia has the opportunity to think boldly and lead with similar ambition.

We also need increased investment in cultural infrastructure, stronger Australian content quotas, export pathways for independent artists, and long-term support for culturally led organisations and regional touring. Authentic Australian storytelling must be protected and prioritised, particularly in a rapidly changing digital and AI-driven landscape.

Importantly, the arts must be recognised not only for their economic contribution, but for their social value. Art creates empathy. It creates belonging. It creates healing. It gives people opportunities to connect to themselves and to each other in meaningful ways. At a time of increasing uncertainty and division, Australian culture must be treated as a public good — something worth protecting, investing in, and allowing to grow in all its complexity and diversity.

Australia is filled with extraordinary creative talent. With bold, future-focused leadership, we can build a cultural sector where artists are not merely surviving, but truly able to thrive.