

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am a sustainability researcher and educator with experience in carbon accounting and circular supply chains across Australia, the UK and Europe. My work has included operational delivery of circular packaging programs for major cultural institutions. I have taught at postgraduate level at Sotheby's Institute of Art and hold an MA in Art Logistics, with a dissertation focused on digital innovation for carbon data logging in the cultural sector.

Strong Cultural Infrastructure must include the systems that connect Australian culture to the world.

The consultation paper makes the point that Australia's creative exports shape how we are seen internationally and that our position in a competitive global environment will determine whether we can retain creative talent and reach international markets. That argument is right. But it points to an infrastructure gap the policy has not yet named.

Australian cultural institutions moving work to Europe face a hard deadline. The EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation applies to all packaging placed on the EU market regardless of where it originates and extends its core provisions to shipments from Australia from 12 August 2026. Reuse targets, recyclability requirements and producer responsibility obligations will apply to every gallery, museum or artist sending work to Paris, Berlin or Amsterdam. There are no geographical exemptions. The deadline is weeks away.

This sits alongside two converging domestic pressures. Mandatory climate disclosure under the Treasury Laws Amendment (Financial Market Infrastructure and Other Measures) Act 2024 now requires larger entities including eligible not-for-profits meeting the relevant thresholds, from financial years commencing July 2026, to report climate-related risks and emissions across their full value chains. And national packaging reform is accelerating: Environment Ministers confirmed earlier this year their commitment to mandatory nationally consistent packaging regulations under the APCO framework, with a draft intergovernmental agreement in development.

Three overlapping regulatory frameworks. No cultural sector guidance for any of them.

The sector has already identified this. Recent roundtables with Australian arts organisations flagged carbon management and accounting among the most urgent capability gaps and a sector-wide capacity building program is in development. Digital tools for emissions tracking and carbon data logging are emerging and the methodological groundwork exists. What is missing is the policy architecture to make any of it coherent, funded and sector-wide.

The new National Cultural Policy should respond directly under Pillar 4 with three concrete commitments: a sector-wide sustainability and carbon literacy framework addressing both domestic and international compliance obligations; a clear directive to Creative Australia to fund and resource this as a priority rather than leaving individual institutions to solve it alone; and specialist guidance on how mandatory climate disclosure requirements apply to cultural organisations, closing a gap that currently sits between arts policy and financial regulation with nobody owning it.

The regulatory moment has arrived before the policy has. That is the gap this submission is asking the new National Cultural Policy to close.