

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Organisation

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

National Cultural Policy – Safekeeping of remote Indigenous Community Collections

Australia is home to around 500 unique nations and 250 language groups with unique cultural values, governance, and creative practices embedded in their cultural heritage. This heritage is supported by significant holdings with widespread cultural importance and economic value. They are an irreplaceable and vulnerable cultural asset.

Across Pillars 1 to 4, First Peoples' priorities in remote communities and art centres lack visibility. For long term development of First Peoples' art and culture, the lack of resources, training and fit-for-purpose infrastructure need to be addressed, "to give real jobs to Aboriginal people caring and looking after objects in their community" and to recognise the value of cultural safekeeping in "keeping a knowledge system alive...the longest living culture on earth" as stated by [REDACTED], 2017.

Challenges and Opportunities

1. Cultural maintenance supports authentic cultural production. Revive 2023 focuses on creative production. Revive 2027 provides an opportunity to support and strengthen cultural maintenance, particularly in remote communities facing climate-related and other risks.
2. First Peoples' art centres deserve national recognition. These on Country resources provide cultural authority to lead and guide access for community beyond the current focus on major centres.
3. Strengthening capability and secure jobs require support. Better investment is required to upskill and retain arts workers in remote art centres, strengthening on-Country training schemes and creating job opportunities.
4. Cultural conservation is health. Understanding cultural conservation as a First Peoples' health asset highlights opportunities for art centre development and new funding pathways.
5. Diverse funding models deliver opportunity. Relative to other sectors remote Indigenous arts and culture receive a fraction of philanthropic funding so there is an opportunity to enable more diverse funding models for First Peoples' art centres.

Recommendations:

1. Ensure whole-of-government coordination of policies for First Peoples' art and culture to better address the complex needs of remote art centres.
2. Strengthen funding for remote art centres to ensure fit-for-purpose infrastructure to support collection conservation, repatriation and access, as well as purposeful, two-way, on-Country education programs.
3. Co-develop and promote philanthropic models specific to the First Peoples' arts sector.
4. Support research in under-developed areas focusing on First Peoples' cultural heritage intersections with Indigenous health.

5. Support cultural conservation through digitisation, and by strengthening local capability in on-Country care, prioritising First Peoples' conservation practice.
6. Align regional planning for training related to remote collections, including disaster response, co-developing programs for the needs of individual art centres.
7. Establish clear processes and accountabilities across government with a scorecard to identify, track and respond to Indigenous inequity in government funded and sponsored arts and cultural programs.

Thank you for your time. Please consider this submission in conjunction with individual submissions by Ameliah-Rose Tioriori, Brigid Stapleton, Caleb Triscari, Cheralyn Lim, and Haoyi Li. Please also refer to submissions from Robyn Sloggett, and ANKA.