

Submission to the National Cultural Policy Consultation

I am a Tasmanian visual artist working across traditional and AI-assisted media. My practice combines painting, photography, digital image systems, storytelling, and community-oriented creative exploration. I am particularly interested in how emerging technologies can be integrated into human artistic practice without losing the central role of the artist. One of the underlying questions in this consultation is why governments should continue supporting arts and culture at all. My answer is simple: because without cultural support, public attention naturally narrows toward whatever is already commercially dominant and familiar. An old Australian advertising slogan once described Australia as “football, meat pies, kangaroos and Holden cars.” The slogan was funny, iconic, and culturally memorable, but it also unintentionally demonstrates why cultural policy matters. A healthy culture cannot be reduced to a single commercial or national image. Contemporary Australia is pluralistic, regionally diverse, technologically changing, and culturally layered. Arts funding helps maintain that complexity.

1. First Nations First

I support the recognition that First Nations cultures are foundational to Australian cultural life and should remain central within national cultural policy. Australia's cultural identity cannot be understood honestly without acknowledging the depth and continuity of First Nations knowledge, storytelling, language, and artistic practice. As artists and communities continue adapting to technological and social change, it is important that cultural policy supports respectful collaboration, cultural authority, and opportunities for First Nations artists to shape how their own work and histories are represented within both traditional and emerging media.

2. A Place for Every Story

Cultural policy should recognise not only major institutions and metropolitan centres, but also smaller communities, regional artists, interdisciplinary practices, older artists adapting to technology, and emerging forms of creative expression. In my own experience as a Tasmanian artist working with both traditional and AI-assisted media, accessibility matters enormously. Artists should not need to become programmers or technical specialists in order to participate meaningfully in new cultural forms.

3. Centrality of the Artist

Artists remain central to cultural life even as technologies change. AI systems and digital tools do not remove the importance of artists; rather, they create new environments for exploration, experimentation, composition, editing, symbolism, and storytelling. The artist remains the person who provides judgment, emotional direction, cultural understanding, and final resolution. Cultural policy should support artist-led experimentation and adaptation rather than framing technology only as a threat.

4. Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Cultural infrastructure includes more than major buildings and institutions. It also includes regional networks, community organisations, workshops, local galleries, shared spaces, digital infrastructure, and educational access. Regional artists often work across multiple disciplines with limited resources, yet these smaller ecosystems are where much experimentation and community engagement occurs. Cultural policy should continue

strengthening regional infrastructure and ensuring that emerging technologies and digital creative systems are accessible beyond major metropolitan centres.

5. Engaging the Audience

Culture depends upon participation, curiosity, conversation, and shared experience. Public engagement with the arts becomes stronger when people feel welcomed into creative processes rather than excluded by technical language or institutional barriers. One of the most valuable possibilities within emerging technologies is their ability to open creative exploration to people who may previously have felt disconnected from artistic practice. Public understanding, cultural literacy, and community-based engagement should remain important priorities within future cultural policy. Culture is not only entertainment or economic activity. It is how communities remember, question, adapt, imagine, and remain open to change. A healthy society requires room not only for dominant mainstream culture, but also for smaller voices, regional perspectives, experimentation, humour, memory, and emerging forms still taking shape.