



Who we are?

The [University of Wollongong](#) offers the [Bachelor of Creative Arts](#)—a long-established degree with more than forty years of continuous delivery. The program enjoys strong community support and industry partnerships. Taught by creative arts practitioners and scholars of national standing, the degree produces graduates who make significant contributions to the creative and cultural sector, education, community leadership and Australia's public life.

This submission is written from this perspective. It was prepared by Associate Professor Jo Law, Head of the School of Creative Arts and Humanities and submitted on behalf the School.

Culture as a Democratic Foundation

We advocate that a National Cultural Policy is not only a funding framework; it builds **national capability**.

A strong Cultural Policy affirms the Arts as a distinct sector with its own values, logics, and purpose. It recognises Art and Culture as foundational to a robust democracy, explicitly acknowledging their intellectual and civic importance. Through this lens, art and culture strengthen critical thinking, enable respectful dissent, foster civic participation, and cultivate the imagination needed to shape better futures.

Our recommendations align with ANA's [Imagine 2035](#), for the new National Cultural Policy to build a thriving and resilient arts ecosystem.

Recommendations

The new policy should lead with strengths in how the arts deliver social and cultural values for the public good—rather than continue to define and justify the Arts solely in economic terms.

1: First Nations First

We commend this pillar. Attention to First Nations artistic contributions strengthens democracy and is vital to Australian culture.

2: A Place for Every Story

We commend programs such as *Creative Futures* for increasing regional access and engagement.

We recommend:

1. increasing Research and Development funding that cultivates uniquely positioned and unproven works without commercial imperatives;
2. prioritising artistic risk, community relevance, and diverse voices over low-risk, market-ready products.

3: The Centrality of the Artist

We commend the recognition of the artist but recommend moving away from “artist as workers” to a focus on growing a healthful art ecosystem with the artist as the foundation. Funding should be directed to sustained mechanisms that:

1. support ambitious, exploratory work alongside impactful outcomes via realigned funding criteria;
2. provide platforms that allow artists, audiences, and the sector to connect and grow ideas together;
3. allocate dedicated time and resources to artistic research and development (e.g. residencies and fellowships).

We support the National Advocates for Arts Education submission, which calls for bringing the transformative role of arts education in society to forefront in the new National Cultural Policy.

4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Strong cultural infrastructure means an Arts ecosystem capable of sustaining long-term cultural vitality at all scales. The policy should:

1. rebalance investment across the full sector, supporting institutions of all scales—from small-scale experimentation to major institutions;
2. fund new priority areas with additional resources, rather than redirecting support within an already strained system;
3. address the current “no growth” funding environment that makes public funding a “zero-sum” game.

Pillar 5: Engaging the Audience

We recommend framing audience development as a cultural ambition rather than a marketing problem, by:

1. making meaningful investment in developing new audiences or readerships;
2. funding alternative models such as single-night events, small-scale presentations, or exploratory programming;
3. cultivating emerging voices and mid-career/ established artists who produce non-commercially driven but culturally important work.