

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The National Cultural Policy must position the arts more clearly within schools as central to workforce development, community wellbeing and lifelong cultural participation. Stronger alignment between policy goals, funding, education systems, sector capability and pathways from primary to tertiary education will ensure long-term sustainability, accessibility and relevance of Australia's arts and cultural landscape.

First Nations First: The policy must move beyond inclusion toward structural reform grounded in Cultural authority, Community-led governance and long-term investment in Cultural preservation. Consultation with First Nations communities consistently highlights the need for Cultural decision-making to remain with Cultural knowledge holders, while funding and policy structures must better support Community-led practices. Arts education is a powerful vehicle for Cultural transmission, language revitalisation and self-determination. Sustained investment in First Nations-led curriculum development and professional learning is needed, alongside stronger pathways for First Nations artists, Elders and Cultural practitioners to lead and mentor within schools and arts organisations.

A Place for Every Story: Significant inequities exist in access to arts participation, particularly in regional, remote and low socio-economic communities. Arts learning is a cultural right for all young people, who should be recognised not only as future artists and audiences, but as active participants today. Early engagement in the arts supports creativity, cultural understanding and social connection. Greater investment in school and community arts programs, especially for underserved communities, culturally diverse groups and people with disabilities, is essential. Professional development and support for educators is critical to delivering high-quality, culturally respectful learning experiences.

Centrality of the Artist: The policy must recognise educational pathways that develop artists, educators and creative professionals. Arts education in schools, studios and communities is foundational to sustaining the future arts workforce. Declining arts enrolments, reduced tertiary arts provision and increasing barriers to study threaten long-term sector sustainability. Young people should be recognised as artists now, with educators valued as co-artists who foster creativity and Cultural learning.

Strong Cultural Infrastructure: A broader understanding of infrastructure is needed, including education systems, workforce capability, safeguarding frameworks and community partnerships, not only physical venues. Schools, universities, TAFEs and arts organisations are essential cultural infrastructure. Declining arts participation, inequitable subject scaling, reduced access to specialist teachers and limited regional opportunities remain significant barriers. Coordinated national investment in arts education, regional infrastructure, digital access and stronger partnerships between schools and cultural institutions is essential.

Engaging the Audience: Audience engagement begins through childhood participation and exposure to the arts. Participation itself should be recognised as a key form of audience engagement, particularly where audiences and participants often overlap. Accessibility, inclusion and the social and wellbeing benefits of the arts are fundamental to a cultural policy that supports lifelong creative engagement for all Australians.