

Revive: A Place for Every Story?

Multicultural Arts Needs Major Sector Development

Submission to the National Cultural Policy Consultations, May 2026

A place for every story? Maybe in the future.

In ***Towards Equity 2***, on every measure of inclusion, the multicultural arts sector is significantly under – represented.

Post the tragic terrorist event at Bondi in December 2025 it is impossible not to be attuned to imperatives around ‘social cohesion.’

One month earlier Dr Anne Aly, Minister for Multicultural Affairs delivered a speech entitled ***Reimagining Multiculturalism in Australia***, stating:

This is a moment to reimagine multiculturalism, a multiculturalism that is befitting of the title of the most successful multicultural nation in the world.... it must define multicultural Australia not as a monolith of common cultural values or even multiple common cultural values but through equality of participation in political, social and economic life.

The starting point of this submission is that the delivery of multicultural arts is first and foremost the fulfilment of the inherent and intrinsic rights of the 51 percent of Australians who were born overseas, or have a parent who was born overseas, as articulated by UNESCO - <https://www.unesco.org/en/mondiacult/cultural-rights>

In mid - 2024, ***Towards Fairness, A multicultural Australia for all*** was published. Beyond cultural rights there are also the significant opportunities relating to the instrumental and extrinsic value of multicultural arts:

There is significant opportunity to harness the power of arts and culture and the talents of culturally diverse practitioners to address divisions in society, promote mutual understanding, support cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing, and build a modern shared Australian identity.

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/multicultural-framework-review>

Across both **Revive** and also the recent **National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper** we see principles of Inclusion and Participation articulated therein. We see references to ‘social integration’, ‘cultural diversity’, ‘comings and goings’, ‘change and dynamism’, ‘a range of stories being heard, respected, reflected – and at times contested – in Australia’s collective’. And we see this affirmation:

Participation in culture is linked to stronger communities, better mental health and higher civic trust.... culture fosters belonging and strengthens community resilience.

The Government, in July 2024, committed to applying the principles of **Towards Fairness**. No commitment was given in regards to the 29 recommendations therein.

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/multicultural-framework-review/Documents/multicultural-framework-review-government-response.pdf>

Herein I provide some 11 recommendations relating to sector development for Multicultural Arts in Australia. These recommendations comprise of the following:

- 3 Recommendations from **Towards Fairness**
- 4 Recommendations from Creative Australia’s 20 October 2023 Submission
- 4 Further recommendations from myself.

There is currently a Royal Commission in to Social Cohesion and Anti – Semitism. There is an Inquiry in to Racism against our First Nations peoples. And a party which proudly asserts a policy of homogeneity has recently won a Federal lower house seat.

It is two years since **Towards Fairness** was released. Multicultural Arts is significantly under – represented a present. We need to enhance the Multicultural Arts sector and we need to harness multicultural arts to build participation in the political, social and economic life of this nation.

Yours sincerely

Wes Morris

Brisbane

498 words

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Recommendations List

Recommendations Contained Within The *Towards Fairness Report*

- Recommendation One: Review investment in community cultural programs.
- Recommendation Two: Pilot creative solutions to social challenges.
- Recommendation Three: Embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation.

Recommendations Contained Within Creative Australia's 2023 Submission

- Recommendation Four: Target support for community cultural projects.
- Recommendation Five: Community-driven creative solutions to social challenges.
- Recommendation Six: Embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation.
- Recommendation Seven: Develop an industry-wide Fair, Safe and Respectful Framework.

Additional Recommendations Proposed by Wes Morris

- Recommendation Eight: Study the Contribution of arts and cultural access to promoting social inclusion.
- Recommendation Nine: Foster the Multicultural Arts Network.
- Recommendation Ten: Use the Brisbane Olympics 2032 to Showcase Australia to the World as Truly Being 'the most successful multicultural nation in the world.'
- Recommendation Eleven: Build the sustainability of Multicultural Arts organisations in Australia

[An annotated list of these same 11 Recommendations can be found on the following pages].

A Suggestion For a Nation Located in the Pacific and Hosting the Olympics in the Year 2032

The Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture is held every four years. The next FestPAC is set for June 12-23rd, 2028, in New Caledonia. Australia always participates in FestPac –

The Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC) is the Pacific's largest regional cultural gathering of people and one of the largest cultural gatherings in the world. FestPAC has been held every 4 years since its inception in 1972, when it was held in Fiji as a celebration of the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific and their traditions, languages and cultures. The 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC) was held 6-16 June 2024 in Hawai'i. Creative Australia took a delegation of 75 First Nations people. The next FestPAC gathering will occur in New Caledonia in 2028.

[https://creative.gov.au/news-events/news/announcing-australian-delegation-festpac-major-gathering-first-nations-arts-and](https://creative.gov.au/news-events/news/announcing-australian-delegation-festpac-major-gathering-first-nations-arts-and-culture)

Being held every four years, there will be a FestPac in 2032. This is the same year as Brisbane and the broader South East Queensland region will be hosting the Olympic Games.

Australia should apply to host FestPac 2032, on the traditional lands of the Jagera; Turrbal; Quandamooka; and Yugambeh peoples ie South – East Queensland.

This suggestion is explored in more depth later in this submission.

Revive: A Place for Every Story?

Multicultural Arts Needs Major Sector Development

Executive Summary

The release of *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place* marked an important shift in Australian cultural policy. The very sub -title of the policy ie ‘a place for every story, a story for every place’ speaks to a recognition of the highly diverse nature of Australian society, and the many forms of cultural expression within this nation.

The recent *National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper* attests that:

Participation in culture is linked to stronger communities, better mental health and higher civic trust.... culture fosters belonging and strengthens community resilience.

However, while *Revive* represented meaningful progress, the next phase of national cultural reform involves translating the recognition of our national diversity into structures, relationships and long-term investments in to our multicultural Arts sector.

For now, there remains a significant disconnect between the language of ‘inclusion’ and ‘participation’ and what the hard data tells us about the under- representation of, and the lack of support for, the multicultural arts sector.

In November 2025, Dr Anne Aly, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, spoke of *Reimagining Multiculturalism in Australia*. Dr Aly spoke of ‘equality of participation in political, social and economic life.’ She specifically spoke of her concerns around the ‘performative expression of culture and tradition.’

In the wake of the tragic terrorist event at Bondi, we have already seen our Governments, State and Commonwealth, Labor and Liberal, retreat from Dr Aly’s invitation for us to reimagine multiculturalism in Australia. A full two years since the publication of the *Multicultural Review Report, Towards Fairness*, we await a Government response.

This submission positions the next National Culture Policy as an opportunity for the nation not to retreat from, but rather to embrace Dr Aly’s vision. This submission provides guidance around how to develop the structures and platforms required to give true expression to Dr Aly’s goals of embeddedness and full participation. This submission provides clear and practical guidance around what is needed to build the multicultural arts sector and to truly provide ‘a place for every story and a story for every place.’

A Note on Terminology.

In the first ***Towards Equity*** report one can read as follows, on page 39::

The Australia Council aims to contribute to ways terminology can evolve for future research and policy development. One of the clear calls for action from ‘CALD’ session participants in our 2020 Re-imagine national sector consultation was not to be called ‘CALD,’ but to use a term which centred them. Participants identified with alternative terms including ‘global majority’. Work is in progress by key national industry bodies (with lived experience)²² to determine appropriate, consistent and self-determined terminology for data collection and reporting. The Australia Council is part of this national conversation.

This present author concurs with the sentiment that:

One of the clear calls for action from ‘CALD’ session participants in our 2020 Re-imagine national sector consultation was not to be called ‘CALD.’

The term CALD is “considered no longer fit for purpose.” It has connotations of ‘othering’ and it can serve to reinforce marginalisation.

This present author holds the view that the arts practices of the multicultural sector are multicultural arts. BEMAC, for instance, describes itself thus:

BEMAC has grown to become the state’s leading multicultural arts producer, presenter and artistic development organisation. <https://bemac.org.au/about-bemac/>

Accordingly, the terminology used in this document is ‘Multicultural Arts’.

Recommendations

Recommendations Contained Within The *Towards Fairness* Report

1. Recommendation One: Review investment in community cultural programs.

Creative Australia to undertake a whole-of-government review of investment in community cultural programs.

2. Recommendation Two: Pilot creative solutions to social challenges.

Creative Australia to lead development of a pilot multi-year seed fund for community-driven creative solutions to social challenges.

3. Recommendation Three: Embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation.

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts to establish a program for community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation.

Recommendations Contained Within Creative Australia's 2023 Submission

Creative Australia, in its 9-page long submission to the *Towards Fairness* consultations, recommended the following four actions, [abbreviated] as follows:

4. Recommendation Four: Target support for community cultural projects.

The Department of Home Affairs refine current investment programs to target support for community cultural projects.

5. Recommendation Five: Community-driven creative solutions to social challenges

The Department of Home Affairs invest in a pilot multi-year seed fund for community-driven creative solutions to social challenges (including, for example, social isolation and disengagement).

[It is recognised that this is the same, or similar, to one of the previous recommendations].

6. Recommendation Six: Embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation.

The Department of Home Affairs establish a program for multicultural community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation.

[It is recognised that this is the same, or similar, to one of the previous recommendations].

7. Recommendation Seven: Develop an industry-wide Fair, Safe and Respectful Framework.

The Department of Home Affairs invest in Creative Workplaces (within Creative Australia) to support the development of an industry-wide Fair, Safe and Respectful Framework.

<https://creative.gov.au/about-us/submissions-advocacy/submissions>

Additional Recommendations Proposed by Wes Morris

8. Recommendation Eight: Study the Contribution of arts and cultural access to promoting social inclusion.

Undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of multicultural arts in promoting social inclusion and in combatting challenges to multiculturalism in Australia.

Page 123 of ***Towards Fairness*** lists ‘exploring arts and cultural access and engagement’ as one of the most pressing research issues for multicultural Australia.

9. Recommendation Nine: Foster the Multicultural Arts Network.

Foster and assist the development of a Multicultural Arts Network.

It is recognised that many organisations contribute significantly to multicultural arts – as a secondary outcome for their organisations.

The leading role of Diversity Arts Australia is also recognised.

It is suggested that initially such a Multicultural Arts Network would consist of organisations which have as their primary remit the support of Multicultural Arts. This may include, but would not be limited to, the likes of Diversity Arts Australia; Multicultural Arts Victoria; BEMAC; BIPOC Arts Australia; Multicultural Museums Victoria (MMV).

10. Recommendation Ten: Use the Brisbane Olympics 2032 to Showcase Australia to the World as Truly Being ‘the most successful multicultural nation in the world.’

The overriding concept underlying the Brisbane Olympics is the concept of ‘legacy.’ To date this concept has had an outsized focus on hard infrastructure, especially around sporting facilities and transport.

There is an emergent and nascent recognition of the need for ‘legacy’ to extend beyond train lines and sporting arenas. And Brisbane is increasingly marketing itself as being Australia’s Asian city ie eg <https://beda.brisbane.qld.au/brisbane-brief>

But much work remains to be done to harness the opportunity of using the Brisbane Olympics 2032 to showcase Australia to the world as truly being ‘the most successful multicultural nation in the world.’

11. Recommendation Eleven: Build the sustainability of Multicultural Arts organisations in Australia

Refer once again to Recommendation One:

[Review investment in community cultural programs.](#)

In the absence of, and prior to such a Review being undertaken, the following can be noted:

- The ***National Performing Arts Partnership Framework*** supports 39 Organisations, three of which are explicitly First Nations companies. None of the 39 has a primary remit around Multicultural Arts.
- The ***Four-Year Investment Program*** supports some 109 organisations, plus a further 30 ‘Delivery Partners’. This list includes a significant number of First Nations Arts organisations and a significant number of Community Cultural Development organisations. Almost all of the 139 organisations are committed to the principles of Inclusion and Participation. Perhaps 4 of the 139 would describe their primary remit, and their reason for being, as the delivery of Multicultural Arts.

The purpose of the ***Four-Year Investment Program*** is as follows:

[This investment enables organisations to plan with longer-term certainty and increase their capacity to leverage other support and collaborations.](#)

Essentially, it is designed to contribute to the sustainability and capacity of small to medium Arts organisations.

At present, organisations with a primary remit around Multicultural Arts are significantly under- represented in both of Creative Australia’s key funding programs. This reality goes a long way towards explaining and understanding the causes of the far from satisfactory outcomes and metrics revealed by the outcomes and data within the ***Towards Equity 2*** report.

Key Claims, Findings and Assertions

1. Australian society is becoming more fragmented and less cohesive.

Key moments or inflection points on a recent national journey downhill to less social cohesion have been the latest referendum; the terrorist event at Bondi Beach; and the election of a One Nation member in a by – election for the Federal seat of Farrer.

2. *Revive* affirms principles which relate to cultural diversity, inclusion, participation and a place for all stories and committed to action.

Revive, committed to the following action:

Undertake a Multicultural Framework Review to ensure the Australian Government's policy settings and institutional frameworks support efforts to further strengthen social cohesion and inclusion across modern multicultural Australia.

On Page 96 of *Revive*, we read the following:

Success is a whole-of government endeavour. We will continue to work closely with stakeholders and all levels of government to deliver outcomes that are aligned with the National Cultural Policy's pillars and guiding priorities.

Thus, *Revive* specifically commits the Government to undertaking the Multicultural Framework Review. There are some 29 Recommendations contained within the subsequent *Towards Fairness* report of 2024. Most of those recommendations lie outside of the remit of the Arts portfolio [although three recommendations lie within the Arts portfolio remit]. It is incumbent upon the Office of the Arts, and Creative Australia, to lead a process in which the Arts agencies of Government play a national leadership role in fostering collaboration across portfolios, and coordination between all levels of government, to create an environment that supports, fosters and encourages Multicultural Arts.

3. In Its Response to *Towards Fairness*, the Government committed to the core principles of Connection; Identity and belonging; and Inclusion:

- **Connection** – setting the foundations of a multicultural Australia through leadership, planning, and accountability between three tiers of government and communities.
- **Identity and belonging** – creating a welcoming Australia through English language programs, citizenship policy, and participation in arts, culture, sports, and media.

Experiences of discrimination and racism comprise the second of the top ten themes identified in submissions to the Review.

- **Inclusion** – building cultural capability into public services, modernising grant programs, ensuring digital inclusion, ensuring a sustainable language services sector, and meeting the unique needs of young people and regional areas.

www.homeaffairs.gov.au/multicultural-framework-review/Documents/multicultural-framework-review-government-response.pdf

On page 72 of **Revive**, we read as follows:

Like the building of physical infrastructure such as roads and bridges, strong cultural infrastructure requires a framework that facilitates partnership and coordination between the Commonwealth, states and territories and local governments. A national approach is needed to promote and support cross-portfolio opportunities and to address national challenges for the sector.

Thus, it is incumbent upon Government to build strong cultural infrastructure and a framework that facilitates partnership and coordination to promote Multicultural Arts in Australia, both for its intrinsic and inherent value, and for its instrumental and extrinsic value, merits and benefit.

4. Following the Bondi Terror Attack, The Government Has Pulled Back from Dr Anne Aly's *Reimagining Multiculturalism in Australia*.

In her *Reimagining Multiculturalism in Australia* speech Dr Aly warns that Australia's approach to Multiculturalism to date has thus far failed to 'break down structural barriers to participation.'

There are a good number of people, especially in the Arts community, and most particularly in the community of writers in Australia, who would argue that post – Bondi, it is the Government itself that is restricting and limiting participation in democratic processes. The Human Rights Commission has issued Media Statements supporting the right to protest in a democratic society, and also around condemning rising levels of Islamophobia. A good number of people are of the view that the Government itself is using 'social cohesion' as a code term for restricting difference and democratic expression in this nation.

5. Building A Modern, Shared Australian identity through Arts and Culture.

TOWARDS FAIRNESS A multicultural Australia for all [2024] states as follows:

There is significant opportunity to harness the power of arts and culture and the talents of culturally diverse practitioners to address divisions in society, promote mutual understanding, support cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing, and build a modern shared Australian identity.

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/multicultural-framework-review/towards-fairness>

I would fully endorse these comments, which were made two years ago. There were some 29 Recommendations that accompanied those comments. And the Government has not, as yet, committed to acting on those recommendations.

Dr Aly's vision was:

not as a monolith of common cultural values or even multiple common cultural values but through equality of participation in political, social and economic life. Hence its premise must not be cultural pluralism but democratic pluralism recognising that difference is a hallmark of democracy

<https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/AnneAly/Pages/speech-reimagining-multiculturalism-australia-11122025.aspx>

I urge the Government not to pull back in the wake of the tragic events at Bondi. I urge the Government to rather recommit itself to its earlier affirmations around:

'harness[ing] the power of Arts and culture to address divisions in society, promote mutual understanding, support cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing.'

6. An Updated and Revised *National Cultural Policy* Represents an Opportunity for Australia to Renew Its *Reimagining Multiculturalism in Australia*.

In 2024 the Commonwealth Government committed itself to the principles of Connection; Identity and belonging; and Inclusion. These principles can in fact be found expressed in the earlier, existing ***Revive, National Cultural Policy***.

A revision of the ***National Cultural Policy*** represents an important opportunity for the Government to re- commit to these three principles, and to embrace the opportunity to address divisions in society, promote mutual understanding, support cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing, and build a modern shared Australian identity.

This can only be done by the Government committing to, not only the principles, in theory, but to enacting the existing recommendations around the Arts and Culture sector – recommendations which, to date, have not been taken up and enacted by Government.

I note once again Dr Aly's concerns around tokenism and conditionality:

[The sole focus] on celebrations of food, dance and colourful costume.

It devalues diversity by reducing it to the performative expression of culture and tradition, conveniently circumventing any meaningful discussion of the real economic and social benefits that diversity brings.

<https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/AnneAly/Pages/speech-reimagining-multiculturalism-australia-11122025.aspx>

But in the context of this submission to ***Revive, the National Cultural Policy***, we are not here to solely consider what we might call folk traditions. In the space of a couple of days I may watch traditional Serbian folk dancing, celebrating St George's day. Two Federal Parliamentarians are with me in the audience. And then a couple of days later I watch a live music performance, electronica and rap, sung in the Farsi language of Persia. Both are completely valid and both contribute enormously to the life of Australia.

But in the context of the ***National Cultural Policy***, and given Dr Aly's stated concerns around the hitherto conditional nature of multiculturalism in Australia, it is perhaps those organisations that have a primary remit around Multicultural Arts that provide the greatest opportunity for the embeddedness that Dr Aly alludes to. As a nation we should strive to move beyond 'even multiple common cultural values' and we should strive for 'equality of participation in political, social and economic life.'

As we strive for these outcomes around equality of participation, artists performing [for instance] electronic music as they sing in the Farsi language will have much to offer us in terms of embedding an unconditional multiculturalism in Australian life.

Part B: The Need for Sector Development for Multicultural Arts

The Need for Sector Development for Multicultural Arts

Within **Revive**, we can read as follows:

- More than half of Australian residents (51.5 per cent) were either born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas, and over 5.5 million people speak a language other than English at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022a). Australia's multicultural heritage means that our stories are told in many languages. Reflecting this diversity in our national stories helps to express our modern, inclusive national identity and promote culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Australia and overseas. P. 44
- increasing opportunities for participation and encouraging representation, authentic leadership and a sense of belonging across the arts and cultural sector. P. 44
- Undertake a Multicultural Framework Review to ensure the Australian Government's policy settings and institutional frameworks support efforts to further strengthen social cohesion and inclusion across modern multicultural Australia. P. 49

Despite more than half of Australian residents (51.5 per cent) being born overseas, or having a parent who was born overseas, 'Multicultural Arts' is not treated in the Arts landscape as a category unto itself. Multicultural Arts is typically framed as follows:

- People from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Early on in this present submission I noted that the Australia Council for the Arts ie pre – Creative Australia had acknowledged as follows, in **Towards Equity**:

One of the clear calls for action from 'CALD' session participants in our 2020 Re-imagine national sector consultation was not to be called 'CALD.'

This call does not seem to have been acted on over the ensuing six years. Thus, Multicultural Arts is still not a recognised category in its own right. The following are recognised 'diversity' categories:

- First Nations people
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- d/Deaf and disabled people
- Women
- People living in regional and remote communities
- Children and young people
- LGBTIQ+ people.

<https://creative.gov.au/research/towards-equity-2-creative-australia-diversity-data-report>

As noted previously, there is policy stasis and inaction around Multiculturalism.

The first words, in the Foreword to ***Towards Equity 2***, are as follows:

Australia's arts and cultural sector is evolving rapidly, shaped by the extraordinary diversity of our communities and the world's oldest living cultures.

It is the contention of this present submission that this 'rapidly evolving arts and culture sector' has in fact not kept up with the rapidly changing and evolving nature of the 'extraordinary diversity of our communities.' It is contended herein that the metrics contained within ***Towards Equity 2*** clearly demonstrate a consistent and significant under – representation of the Multicultural Arts sector. And it is further contended that this under – representation is unlikely to be rectified unless and until there is sector development for the Multicultural Arts sector.

Creative Australia quite rightly allocates the great majority of its expenditure on capacity building programs. Of the 11 Recommendations presented herein, the very first recommendation is this:

Review investment in community cultural programs.

That is one of the 29 Recommendations from ***Towards Fairness***, released in mid-2024 ie two years ago. Unless and until that recommendation is acted on, we won't really have an accurate picture of the resourcing that is currently allocated to Multicultural Arts, both from Government Arts funding bodies, and from elsewhere. But even a cursory examination of Creative Australia's two main funding programs will readily reveal that only a handful of organisations which describe themselves as having a primary remit around Multicultural Arts are funded from those two main funding programs.

There are a range of interesting findings within these following reports:

- ***Towards Equity: A research overview of diversity in Australia's arts and cultural sector***
- ***Towards Equity 2 Creative Australia's diversity data report***
- ***Changing organisations to diversify arts audiences***

Towards Equity 2 states as follows, on page 2:

We are growing our portfolio of multi-year investment organisations, developing delivery partners to provide services for the sector and for specific communities, and have work in progress on regional and youth engagement. These initiatives are designed to build capacity, foster inclusion, and ensure that our programs and investments reflect the diversity of Australia.

At many points in this same ***Towards Equity 2*** report we read about the under – representation of the CALD sector. The data presents the following outcomes to the reader:

- Leadership in multi-year investment organisations [CALD 21%]
- Peer assessment panels [CALD 33%]
- Diversity of individual project investment recipients, 2021–23 [27%]
- Organisation demographics of project investment recipients, 2021–23 [CALD 11 %]

One can legitimately ask what the most appropriate target figures might be. If 51 % of the Australian population is born overseas [or has a parent born overseas], is that the appropriate benchmark and target?

The analysis provided by Creative Australia can be found on page 43, and it reads as follows:

- Just over one in four individual recipients are CALD (27%), substantially up from 12% in 2015–2019. While not directly comparable, this remains below the CALD population estimate which groups European and non-European representation in the Australian population (43%), but it is higher than the proportion of practising artists from a non-English speaking background (13%). It is the strongest CALD representation across Creative Australia grants and initiative categories except international opportunities (29%).⁷¹ CALD individual project investment applicants have a higher success rate than non-CALD applicants.
- 11% of organisation recipients report CALD people as their organisation demographic, marginally up from 8% in 2015–2019. These organisations have a similar success rate to other organisations.

I am not a statistician. Nor am I paid to analyse such data. But the most interesting data point that I have identified is this one:

3c. Capacity building & strategic recipients – orgs 6%

If one was to do a thorough and proper analysis of why there is consistent under – representation of the Multicultural Arts sector against each and every one of the outcomes measures, then one would NOT start by looking at those outcome measures. Instead, one would start by looking at the fact that Creative Australia allocates the great majority of its resources to building the capacity and sustainability of organisations and that alongside of that there is a concept of an Arts organisations ecosystem. The key questions that one would seek to ask would be these:

- How much of the multi-year funding and capacity building expenditure is allocated to organisations that have Multicultural Arts as their primary remit?
- What would an appropriate set of outcomes targets look like?
- What is the pathway towards building a sustainable Multicultural Arts ecosystem?

In his opening words, Creative Australia CEO, Mr Collette states as follows:

We are growing our portfolio of multi-year investment organisations, developing delivery partners to provide services for the sector and for specific communities.

Good. So, the question clearly is this – within that growing portfolio of multi-year investment organisations and delivery partner organisations providing services for the sector and for specific communities, how many of those supported organisations have a primary remit around Multicultural Arts?

As an individual person with extremely limited resources, I am very poorly placed and poorly equipped to provide anything other than a sketched opinion. But it certainly seems to me that the goal, as stated by Mr Collette is as follows:

These initiatives are designed to build capacity, foster inclusion, and ensure that our programs and investments reflect the diversity of Australia.

In terms of Creative Australia's expenditure, the following may be somewhat accurate:

- Historical Context: In 2021–22, the **National Performing Arts Partnership Framework** made up 62% of the major investment portfolio managed by the entity.
- From 2025, Creative Australia will invest \$42.4 million per annum in a range of arts and cultural organisations, providing employment pathways for creative workers and strengthening Australia's arts and cultural sector.

It is my view that in the vicinity of 70% of Creative Australia's expenditure is allocated to organisations via multi – year funding arrangements under the **National Performing Arts Partnership Framework** and the **Four-Year Investment Program**, inclusive of the Delivery Partner Stream.

- The **National Performing Arts Partnership Framework** supports 39 Organisations, three of which are explicitly First Nations companies. None have a primary remit around Multicultural Arts.
- The **Four-Year Investment Program** supports some 109 organisations, plus a further 30 Delivery Partners. This list includes a significant number of First Nations Arts organisations and a significant number of Community Cultural Development organisations. Almost all of

the 139 organisations are committed to the principles of inclusion and participation. Perhaps 4 of the 139 would describe their primary remit and their reason for being as Multicultural Arts.

Towards Fairness, running to some 240 pages in length, was published in around April 2024, and the Government provided an initial three – page long response by July 2024. That initial Government response does not specifically respond to any of the 29 recommendations contained within ***Towards Fairness***.

Now, two years after the release of ***Towards Fairness***, we look forward to learning of when the Government will respond to the report's recommendations.

In its 2023 submission Creative Australia stated as follows:

Creativity is a powerful resource to strengthen multiculturalism in Australia. It offers an expression of our humanity and of the many perspectives, cultures and identities that make up our Australian community. There is significant opportunity to harness the power of arts and culture and the talents of culturally diverse practitioners to address divisions in society, promote mutual understanding, support cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing and build a modern shared Australian identity.

<https://creative.gov.au/about-us/submissions-advocacy/submissions>

I would respectfully submit that at present we as a nation are a long way short of fully 'harnessing the power of arts and culture and the talents of culturally diverse practitioners to address divisions in society, promote mutual understanding, support cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing and build a modern shared Australian identity.'

I would respectfully submit that there is a very strong need for a ***Multicultural Arts Sector Development Plan***.

Some seven recommendations [being five unique recommendations] have been on the table since mid-2024, and are yet to be acted on. I am presenting herein a further four recommendations for consideration.

Have access to Multicultural Arts is, first and foremost, the cultural right of at least 51 percent of the Australian population. Secondly, as Creative Australia noted in 2023, there is significant opportunity to harness the power of arts to build a modern shared Australian identity.

Recommendations Contained Within The *Towards Fairness* Report

- Recommendation One: Review investment in community cultural programs.
- Recommendation Two: Pilot creative solutions to social challenges.
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Recommendations Contained Within Creative Australia's 2023 Submission

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Additional Recommendations Proposed by Wes Morris

- Recommendation Eight: Study the Contribution of arts and cultural access to promoting social inclusion
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- Recommendation Eleven: Build the sustainability of Multicultural Arts organisations in Australia.

Part C: 2032 Olympics – Showcasing World Cultures to the World.

What Will the Olympic Games Legacy Be for Multicultural Australia?

Recommendation Ten:

Use the Brisbane Olympics 2032 to Showcase Australia to the World as Truly Being ‘the most successful multicultural nation in the world.’

The overriding concept underlying the Brisbane Olympics is the concept of ‘legacy.’ To date this concept has had an outsized focus on hard infrastructure, especially around sporting facilities and transport.

There is an emergent and nascent recognition of the need for ‘legacy’ to extend beyond train lines. And Brisbane is increasingly marketing itself as being Australia’s Asian city ie eg as per this webpage - <https://beda.brisbane.qld.au/brisbane-brief>

But much work remains to be done to harness the opportunity to harness the Brisbane Olympics 2032 to showcase Australia to the world as truly being ‘the most successful multicultural nation in the world.’

There are, of course, the overarching Olympic documents, and the overarching Government policy documents. These include the likes of the ***Olympics Delivery Plan*** and also the likes of ***Queensland's Time to Shine Strategy (2025–2035)***. In regards to a Multicultural Arts agenda, this present author has found such documents to be of little value and of limited interest.

Beyond those overarching documents, there appear to be not one but two key documents which outline and describe in some detail an Arts and Cultural Brisbane Olympics Legacy Agenda.

Within the ***Creative Brisbane Collab workshop report*** document, the Introduction to that document commences with these following words:

Brisbane 2032 offers Australia a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to elevate cultural legacies that go far beyond stadiums, medals, or infrastructure. At the heart of this vision is the belief that legacy is relationships, not buildings. The Games will provide a global stage for Queensland to showcase its creativity, diversity and authenticity—but the true measure of success will be how these opportunities embed long-term social, cultural and economic benefits for communities across the state.

<https://www.creativebrisbane.com.au/2032-cultural-legacies-project>

That report then proceeds to present the reader with the following 7 Principles:

- Principle 1: Nothing about us without us
- Principle 2: Turn on all the lights
- Principle 3: There's nothing "nice" about creativity
- Principle 4: Keep it real, keep it Queensland
- Principle 5: Extending time – from the sunshine to the night lights
- Principle 6: Sport, meet art
- Principle 7: We'll take your measure

Within the document, the word 'multicultural' appears not once.

Within the document one does find some noteworthy statements, including the following:

- 1.11 Early, continuing and meaningful co-design engagement in planning and decision making with creatives, with a specific focus on First Nations creatives, creatives with disability and/or who are D/ deaf, young creatives, LGBTQIA+ and other CALD creatives: for stadiums; community facilities; cultural experiences (eg Cultural Olympiad). Good things take time - early engagement is critical.
- 1.15 Determine ambitious and achievable targets for the employment and engagement of local creatives, including a dedicated focus on creatives from the First Nations, disability, youth, LGBTQIA+ and other CALD communities.
- 5.13 Promote cultural vitality, including First Nations storytelling and creative industries.

Page 19 has this heading: 'Our thanks to the workshop table captains'. There is no mention there of BEMAC, SSI or any other multicultural organisation – noting that there is significant First Nations representation. On pages 20 and 21 there are then a list of dozens of names of participants. Once again, there is significant First Nations representation but I cannot immediately find the names of anyone from BEMAC or SSI or any other organisation that I immediately recognise as representing the interests of the multicultural arts sector.

The second main document which speaks to the Cultural Legacy for the Brisbane Olympics 2032 is **THE PERFORMANCE FUTURES MANIFESTO**, as per this following webpage-
<https://www.hassellstudio.com/conversation/the-brisbane-2032-cultural-vision>

On that website one finds the following:

1. Purpose – a shared cultural vision
2. Planet – culture and the environment
3. Profit – a sustainable cultural economy
4. Policy – institutionalising cultural legacy
5. Process – First Nations always, early, and evolving
6. People – Leadership and risk taking
7. Performance – small, fast, and experimental
8. Place – expanding through activation and time
9. Projects – major cultural investments
10. Provide – city-wide, state-wide legacy

Ten themes or key points. All of which are presented at abstracted/ conceptual high levels. Specific consideration is given to the First Nations context. No mention is made of multiculturalism or of ethnically diverse cultural and artistic practices.

There is an accompanying document, called ***Recommendations for Brisbane's cultural future*** <https://www.hassellstudio.com/conversation/recommendations-for-brisbanes-cultural-future> and within that document one can read as follows:

8. HARNESS QUEENSLAND'S DIVERSITY FOR A CULTURAL NETWORK

Queensland's rich mix of cities, regions and communities offers a distinct opportunity to build a vibrant cultural network. With the upcoming investment for the Olympic Games, each locale has a chance to spotlight its unique cultural identity. By strategically leveraging this diversity, Brisbane can position itself as a dynamic hub within a broader, interconnected cultural landscape, ensuring the entire region benefits from global attention and long-lasting creative growth.

Once again there is the reference to diversity, but no actual mention of multiculturalism or of ethnically diverse cultural and artistic practices.

The world will judge Brisbane and Australia on how we celebrate the cultures of the world through our pluralistic, multicultural society, a society which celebrates and showcases cultures of the world, to the world. But What Will the Olympic Games Legacy Be for Multicultural Australia?

Here are some key questions for consideration:

- **Culture and Values:** If we are indeed to 'signal the culture and values of our community to the world', then what culture is that exactly, and what values exactly are they?
- **Representations of Australian Society:** If indeed an entire one third of the Australian population was born overseas, how will these nearly 9 million Australians [and their second generation offspring] be represented, reflected, and celebrated through the hosting of this world event?
- **What Will the Cultural Legacy Be?:** What will the Olympic Games legacy be for Multicultural Australia, and for the 9 million Australians who were born overseas, once the Games are over? How will these Australians be engaged with, represented and empowered by the Olympics? How will their diverse cultures be showcased to the world in the lead up to 2032, in 2032, and beyond 2032?

In the context of the **Revive** national consultations, my key points here are that unless and until there is a conscious, concerted and deliberative process of Multicultural Arts Sector Development, then huge opportunities will be missed. And perhaps the biggest missed opportunity will have been the Brisbane 2030 Olympic Games.

Suggestion: Festival of Pacific Arts, 2032, Hosted by South East Queensland.

This suggestion is not meant to be in any way a full response to the three key questions above.

This suggestion is presented as being an important and significant opportunity. It is very worth consideration and it should be implemented. But beyond its immediate merits and its immediate value, it is also offered by way of an exemplar of, and a pointer towards, what a broader Brisbane Olympic Games cultural legacy could look like.

Appendix One to this submission is an 18th of May 2026 article, originally published in Griffith University's **Asia Insights**. Sean Jacobs is a Papua New Guinean-born Brisbane-based writer, government relations and public policy specialist. He is currently Policy Manager at Committee for Brisbane and Industry Fellow at the Griffith Asia Institute.

In his article, titled **Practical ways, Pacific means: A 2032 Games for the Region**, Jacobs presents, as the title of his paper suggests, a number of practical ways and means that the

Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games can serve to build a legacy for the Pacific Region and for Australia's role in the Pacific, as follows:

1. **Aggregation/ Legacy Framework:** One place to start may be utilising the Queensland Government's legacy framework.
2. **Extending:** Pacific Island Countries will also do well here by thinking hard about their offering, especially given the proximity to Brisbane and regional Queensland Games venues.
3. **Innovating:** This could focus on innovative cost-effective infrastructure solutions that mitigate persistent maintenance hurdles in Pacific environments that address capability gaps.
4. **Competing:** Competing means correctly bundling all the elements that make Brisbane 2032 unique — prioritising sport and other assistance measures, building capability, putting forward our collective best to the world, and creating shared wins for Brisbane, Queensland and our Pacific neighbours.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/practical-ways-pacific-means-2032-games-region-sean-jacobs-zjrmc>

Jacobs' offering is not in any way focused on Pacific Islands Arts and Culture. It leans heavily in to sport and infrastructure. However, what it does do is set out some frameworks within which the Festival of Pacific Arts, were it to be held in Queensland in 2032, could fit in to a legacy dynamic around the broader 'Pacific 2032' concept.

Jacobs' very first sentence in regards to the first of his four key points is as follows:

Aggregation: The first is aggregating — being clear on what fits in the 'Games for the Pacific' bucket and what doesn't.

This cannot be a free-for-all, and there must be a selection and decision making process about what is an appropriate aggregative fit. Not everything belongs in the Olympics bucket.

But within his second theme, that of **Extending**, he also writes this:

that further extends sports into the spheres of climate change, public health and sustainability.

Jacobs makes no mention of culture there. But I would argue that there is appropriate scope for 'aggregation' and for 'extending'. Whether or not it happens in Queensland, there will be a Festpac in the year 2032. It will be held somewhere in the Pacific. So, I would argue that – wherever in the Pacific Festpac 2032 actually takes place, it would be remiss, and possibly it is not too extreme to say even negligent, to not explore linkages between the 2032 Olympics and the 2032 Festpac.

Some of the key elements of Australia's close engagement with its Pacific Region neighbours include the following:

- **Maori and Pacifica Communities:** There are very large Māori and Pacifica communities in Australia, including those that live on the traditional lands of the Jagera people and the Turrbal people; the lands of the Quandamooka people; and the lands of the Yugambeh people. Queensland is home to the largest Māori diaspora in Australia, with the majority concentrated in the Brisbane and Gold Coast regions. Estimates put this number at around 65,000 people. In addition, there are a further 30,000 Samoans. Thus, there are around 100,000 Pacifica people in the Southeast Queensland area without adding on those from the other 11 Pacific Island nations.
- **Almost Seamless Relationship with AOTEAROA [New Zealand]:** Australia and Aotearoa are sovereign nations but the two countries are exceedingly closely linked economically and socially. These are the two largest Pacific Island nations. Australia and New Zealand share one of the most integrated, comprehensive bilateral relationships in the world, underpinned by a dense network of treaties, agreements, and cooperative arrangements.
- **Increasingly Close Relationship with New Guinea:** Australian and PNG have a shared colonial history. They have recently signed a Security Pact – one of very few such agreements signed by Australia. As part of this overall relationship Australia is also supporting the entry of the New Guinea Hunters in to the National Rugby League competition. Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) share a deeply integrated bilateral relationship built on a shared colonial history, close geography, and a framework of overarching treaties. Their formal agreements cover high-level mutual defence, trade, maritime boundaries, and development aid.
- **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent:** Australia's partnerships with Pacific island countries are deep and long-standing. Australia sees the Pacific as family. Australia shares an ocean and a future, custodians of the vast Blue Pacific Continent. The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme allows eligible Australian businesses to hire workers from 9 Pacific islands and Timor-Leste. PALM is one of the 12 key planks of the **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent**.

At present there are some 12 planks or streams within the overarching **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent**. At present, Cultures and Cultural Connections are not one of these 12 planks.

The Olympics is, first and foremost, a sporting event. The Olympics is, secondly, about infrastructure and capital works. And Jacob's warning is timely and cautionary:

being clear on what fits in the 'Games for the Pacific' bucket and what doesn't.

Not everything has a natural or an appropriate fit with the Olympics.

Nonetheless, I hold that Australia should apply to host FestPac 2032, on the traditional lands of the Jagera; Turrbal; Quandamooka; and Yugambeh peoples ie South – East Queensland.

In talking about Australia's \$600m commitment to the New Guinea Hunters NRL team, Australian Prime Minister Albanese said as follows:

Albanese said the countries are now in it together: "Today is a day where people will look back in five years, 10 years, 20 years, and see that this was a day where the relationship between our nations was cemented even further."

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2024/dec/12/explainer-inside-png-nrl-deal-how-the-licence-was-won-and-what-comes-next>

South East Queensland hosting FestPAC 2032 could arguably achieve some of these same important regional consolidation outcomes, at a tiny fraction of that \$600M price.

In 2032 there will be a Festpac ie a Festival of Pacific Arts. That event will be held somewhere in the Pacific, in the same year as Brisbane hosts the Olympics.

It would be remiss, and possibly it is not too extreme to say negligent, to not explore linkages between the 2032 Olympics and the 2032 Festpac.

Appendix One:

Practical ways, Pacific means: A 2032 Games for the Region

By Sean Jacobs, 18th of May, 2026

1. Aggregating

The first is aggregating — being clear on what fits in the ‘Games for the Pacific’ bucket and what doesn’t.

The most obvious fit is sport. The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) has a PacificAus Sports program, aimed at supporting athletes from across all Pacific Island nations, not to mention the Federal Government’s Sports Diplomacy 2032+ pledge, which leverages the “Green and Gold Decade” of sporting events leading up to the Brisbane 2032.

But sport at a regional level can quickly become complex, often overlapping with visa, immigration, infrastructure and resourcing issues.

Further adding to this Aus-Pacific-sports web is the fact that all levels of government now possess some level of interaction with the 15 Pacific Island Countries (PICs).

While we often look to Canberra for external affairs, it is State and local governments also reaching out to Pacific neighbours, whether it be Trade and Investment Queensland (TIQ’s) dedicated Pacific team, or the City of Moreton Bay’s trans-Tasman bilateral trade efforts.

On the Pacific side, there’s also a mix of national and regional sporting fora — the Oceania National Olympic Committee (ONOC), national committees, federations and even regional sporting events — that further extends sports into the spheres of climate change, public health and sustainability.

Such a mixed picture will clearly need prioritisation, especially if it is to be relevant and genuinely leverage 2032.

One place to start may be utilising the Queensland Government’s legacy framework — as a guide — to filter the long list of Australia-Pacific commitments, given the emerging emphasis to now prioritise and focus on tangible statewide outcomes around Games-related opportunities.

The Council of Mayors South East Queensland (SEQ) has also undertaken considerable work on prioritisation and impact, which has served as useful counsel against a broad sea of well-intentioned yet expansive ‘Games’ and ‘legacy’ commitments.

2. Extending

The second way to elevate the Pacific 2032 concept is to extend.

And here I mean extending our imagination and thinking of the Games to include the Pacific.

For example, all parts of Queensland are focusing on training camps, acclimatisation, and other lead-up opportunities to play their part.

PICs will also do well here by thinking hard about their offering, especially given the proximity to Brisbane and regional Queensland Games venues.

This will put pressure on Pacific governments to incentivise, not just in terms of accommodation but also training camps and regional immersion — not a small ask, given resourcing and capability constraints.

3. Innovating

This is why the third element is so important — innovating.

We often hear of the term ‘sweating the asset’ when it comes to infrastructure.

PICs are no different.

Asset management in the Pacific is — quite literally — a critical issue, given dilapidated hospitals and medical facilities, not to mention the grim features of Pacific schools, roads, and utilities, and sanitation infrastructure.

Indeed, World Bank studies in the Pacific note that, over the life cycle, “public assets can be more than four times the capital costs.” It suggests mitigating this through the establishment of maintenance funds and capacity building programs “to plan, prioritise, and deliver the capital maintenance programs.”

Given that 2032 delivery partners are in the thick of ‘plan, prioritise and deliver’ — a shared and perennially tough space for Pacific nations — a technical exchange or ‘infrastructure twinning’ program for Pacific firms could be a relatively low-cost but timely strategy for industry to adopt or governments to sponsor.

This could focus on innovative cost-effective infrastructure solutions that mitigate persistent maintenance hurdles in Pacific environments that address capability gaps. And how to appropriately ‘sweat’ an asset to keep revenue coming through the door.

4. Competing

The fourth and final way to elevate a Games for the Pacific is by competing.

In 2019, I wrote a related piece on sport and development celebrating two things.

The Australian Sports Diplomacy Strategy — the first of its kind.

And the fact that Fiji had become back-to-back gold medallists in Rugby Sevens with very little technical infrastructure.

Indeed, it is beyond amicable that a nation with no sophisticated sports science regime — and a relatively small population — can dominate the global stage.

PNG and its rugby league expansion is another potential example, although the next few years will highlight just how difficult it is to sustain an elite franchise in a tough part of the world.

Competing means correctly bundling all the elements that make Brisbane 2032 unique — prioritising sport and other assistance measures, building capability, putting forward our collective best to the world, and creating shared wins for Brisbane, Queensland and our Pacific neighbours.

Sean Jacobs is a Papua New Guinean-born Brisbane-based writer, government relations and public policy specialist. He is currently Policy Manager at Committee for Brisbane and Industry Fellow at the Griffith Asia Institute.

Article published at Griffith University's ***Asia Insights***.

#Brisbane2032 #Games for the Region #Oceania #Olympic Games #Pacific Islands #Pacific outlook

Appendix Two:

Profile of the Advocacy Agenda of the Author, Wes Morris

I was KALACC's Coordinator between March 2006 and May 2024, when I retired.

In retirement I continue to advocate for the same matters that I advocated for in my working life.

In February 2007 I instigated, and then in many ways led, the first of what went on to become 4 Kimberley Coronial Inquiries. But the Aboriginal suicide rate today is worse than it was back in 2007. Same thing - all treatment and no prevention and no investment in Cultural Resilience or Cultural Maintenance.

Measurement of First Nations Cultural Outcomes

With the support and encouragement of Minister McCarthy and of Julie-Ann Guivarra [Chief Executive Officer of the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)] I have an ongoing engagement with the Australian Centre for Evaluation [within Commonwealth Treasury].

The engagement with Treasury relates to the very significant shortcomings contained in the ***Measuring What Matters Framework*** vis a vis measuring First Nations Cultural Outcomes.

First Nations Cultural Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

UN Special Rapporteur Dr Albert Barume will visit Australia in November 2026, for the purpose of assisting him to prepare a ***UNDRIP Country Report on Australia***.

In the submission that I lodged with Dr Barume in March 2026 I outlined those articles in the UNDRIP which most particularly and explicitly relate to the Cultural Rights of First Nations peoples. And I provided an overview of and my own assessment of Australia's considerable failures to implement and uphold our Treaty Obligations in regards to those UNDRIP Cultural Rights Articles.

Australia has none of the following:

- A UNDRIP Action Plan
- A Stand – Alone First Nations Cultural Policy
- A Peak Body or Voice for the First Nations Arts and Cultural Sector.

Submissions to the Consultations Regarding an Update to Revive, the National Cultural Policy

I have lodged three submissions with the consultations regarding an update to **Revive, the National Cultural Policy**. These three submissions are as follows:

1. Philanthropy and the Arts:

My submission to the current Parliamentary Inquiry can be found here -

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Communications_the_Arts_and_Sport/artsphilanthropy/Submissions

My submission to **Revive**, covers the same terrain ie a number of Federal Ministers have made assertions around how Government and Philanthropy work together – vis a vis Early Childhood. Why don't those same principles apply in the Arts and Culture sector?

2. Multicultural Arts:

This submission to **Revive** contains some 11 Recommendations [9 discrete recommendations ie two are double – ups ie repetitions]:

- Three recommendations from **Towards Fairness**
- Four recommendations from Creative Australia to **Towards Fairness**
- Four new recommendations from myself – around capacity building.

3. First Nations Cultural Rights:

This is essentially a cut and paste and a revision of my March 2026 submission to the United Nations, which in turn was revised and repurposed in to a submission to the Inquiry in to Racism against First Nations peoples.

My LinkedIn Profile reads as follows:

I was KALACC's Coordinator between March 2006 and May 2024, when I retired.

In retirement I can contribute to national discussions in to two key areas:

1. Productivity for Wellbeing, focusing on prevention; and
2. Measuring What Matters Vis a Vis Cultural Outcomes.

1. Productivity for Wellbeing.

My main offering in regards to this can be found here:-

<https://engage.pc.gov.au/projects/quality-care/page/pillar-4-responses> Submissions # 179, 217 and 218- <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries-and-research/mental-health-review/submissions/> Submission #209

In January 2025 Queensland's Chief Health Officer released a report 'Ageing and Future Health Care Demand'. Unless we invest in Preventative strategies, we will soon need an extra 37% more hospital beds. The Productivity Commission is calling for a national framework to support government investment in prevention and early intervention. And unless the Health Sector and the Aged Care sector complement one another and unless they are integrated, then we won't see any significant improvements going forward.

In February 2007 I instigated, and then in many ways led, the first of what went on to become 4 Kimberley Coronial Inquiries. But the Aboriginal suicide rate today is worse than it was back in 2007. Same thing - all treatment and no prevention and no investment in Cultural Resilience.

2. Measuring What Matters Vis a Vis Cultural Outcomes.

Between March and December 2019 I was involved in developing a reporting framework to provide a national overview of the status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage. It is my sincere hope that in 2026 this important work will finally be completed.

I commit myself to doing what I can around the Measuring What Matters agenda. At present we fail to measure First Nations Cultures, and we thus spectacularly fail to in fact Measure What Matters. I have written extensively on these matters and I can be contacted by anyone seeking copies of that material.

Of course, the reality is that if Governments were even remotely interested in significant productivity increases, then they would shift the expenditure focus away from resource - intensive downstream programs to resource - efficient upstream preventative programs. Such programs are not Health or Justice programs but are Cultural Programs delivered by First Nations Cultural organisations ie Arts Centres, Language Centres and Cultural Centres.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/wes-morris-3098059b/>

Appendix Three :

A Narrative and Discussion of Matters Pertaining to Multiculturalism in Australia.

The State of National Discourse Around Multiculturalism in Australia.

‘Social cohesion has lost its feelgood vibe.’

**Faced with headwinds, we can wait no longer to implement the principles of
Connection; Identity and Belonging; and Inclusion.**

**The Government must act on Implementing the Recommendations from the
*Towards Fairness Report.***

At numerous points within this present document, I make reference to Dr Anne Aly’s headland speech of Tuesday, 11 November 2025 - ***Reimagining Multiculturalism in Australia.***

<https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/AnneAly/Pages/speech-reimagining-multiculturalism-australia-11122025.aspx>

Dr Aly’s Reimagining of Multiculturalism canvasses the historical and philosophical dimensions of multiculturalism in Australia, tracing such a history through the White Australia Policy, through the Grasby years, and through to the present moment [pre – the Bondi tragedy].

Perhaps the most thematically important paragraph in Dr Aly’s speech is this one:

Now, detractors of multiculturalism – most notably Blainey – argue that multiculturalism is divisive and threatens national cohesion. What they actually mean is that multiculturalism challenges the concept of nationhood as in incumbent an imagining of an Australian identity in terms of a similar culture – one nation born from and of a single cultural Judeo-Christian tradition. One nation under God. Multiculturalism should challenge these ideas. When it doesn’t, when it prioritises celebration, when it reduces diversity to a nice trope, when it does not address substantive issues, when it perpetuates or at best allows institutionalised racism to continue, then it is not just a missed opportunity; it is an institutionalised legacy of white Australia.

It is doubly tragic that Dr Aly delivered that speech one month before the anti-semitic terrorist attack, the mass shooting that took place at Bondi in December 2025.

And certainly in the wake of the Bondi massacre, there are plenty of articulations of an imagining of an Australian identity in terms of a similar culture – one nation born from and of a single cultural Judeo-Christian tradition. On the extreme, we can witness the straight-out racism of One Nation and of media outlets such as Sky News and the Daily Telegraph.

Somewhat less extreme we have seen in recent days calls from Mr Angus Taylor, the leader of the Federal Liberal Party, to link the rate of immigration with the rate of construction of new houses; to introduce an ‘Australian values’ test for immigrants; and to exclude non – citizens from accessing the NDIS and other forms of social support.

The Federal Labor Government, with its 94 seats in Parliament, has been widely characterised by many commentators as being a cautious, if not downright timid government. And in the wake of the terrible and tragic events of Bondi, there has been considerable pull – back from the Labor Party, at both Federal and State levels.

If there had, in November 2025, been a Government appetite for a bold new leap forward in regards to multiculturalism, such as what was proposed in Dr Aly’s speech of 11 November 2025, then that appetite disappeared overnight on 14th December 2025.

Six months earlier, on July 29, 2025 Peter Hughes wrote an online commentary on the state of multiculturalism in Australia: ***The new Commonwealth office of Multicultural Affairs unveiled*** <https://johnmenadue.com/post/2025/07/the-new-commonwealth-office-of-multicultural-affairs-unveiled/> Of course, Dr Aly is the head of what was then the new Office of Multicultural Affairs. In his article Hughes traces the bureaucratic and structural wanderings of the functions of immigration, which had changed a number of times under various Machinery of Government variations. There had always been, and there remains now, the tensions between the ‘soft and fuzzy’ functions and those associated with ‘a hard-nosed border security portfolio’ with ‘counter-terrorism’ functions. But beyond those insights, Hughes then offers as follows:

the new “office” provides an excellent opportunity for revitalising multicultural policy at the Commonwealth level. It has the advantage of a minister well qualified for the role at the Cabinet table and fresh and energetic leadership at the bureaucratic level.

Time will tell how much the government is committed to implementing recommendations of the Review and how much the new office is able to achieve. Ultimately, it will succeed or fail

depending on how it is able to position the 50-year-old concept of multiculturalism for the next generation of Australians.

Indeed, Hughes is spot on with the observations that the Office of Multicultural Affairs will: succeed or fail depending on how it is able to position the 50-year-old concept of multiculturalism for the next generation of Australians.

Politically, beyond 14th December 2025, the difficulty of such a task has risen exponentially.

Hughes also offers this comment:

Time will tell how much the government is committed to implementing recommendations of the Review and how much the new office is able to achieve.

To date, it is difficult to find any evidence that the 29 recommendations contained within the ***Towards Fairness*** report have actually made their way on to any Government priority list.

This present submission presents the view that the tragic events of Bondi should provide Government with impetus to not delay any further, to not kick the can yet further down the road, but to actually act on implementing the principles of Connection; Identity and Belonging; and Inclusion. Implementing most, if not all, of the 29 recommendations from ***Towards Fairness*** is essential towards achieving that outcome.

Things have certainly soured since December, and this souring is canvassed in the 23 March 2026 article ***Social cohesion has lost its feelgood vibe. What will it take to offer a fair go for all?*** by Julianne Schultz <https://www.theguardian.com/society/ng-interactive/2026/mar/23/social-cohesion-meaning-has-lost-feelgood-vibe> The premise of Schultz's article is as follows:

One term has already become the well-intentioned weasel word of 2026: "social cohesion". A phrase that can be dropped into speeches, inquiries and legislation, its meaning shape-shifts depending on the audience. Is it about "glue" or the rule of law? About community resilience or countering fear? Does it mean finding places of real exchange, or shutting up and getting on?

Subsequent to the terrorist mass shooting at Bondi, we have witnessed a range of collateral impacts on Australian society and the Australian way of life. We have witnessed a Labor State Premier ban a book festival, resulting in the cancellation of that book festival. We have seen a different Labor State Premier introduce bans on marching and democratic activities, only for the

Chief Justice of that State to later overturn that suite of legislation. And we have seen an LNP State Premier introduce bans on the use of a certain phrase, punishable by a jail sentence, for the use of words which that State Government asserts are anti – Semitic in nature. At time of writing, the test of that legislation, before the courts, has only just commenced.

But certainly things have soured since December, and as a sub – set of that broader issue there has been a particular form of consternation playing out in the Arts and Cultural Sector. Some in the Arts and Cultural Sector, dismayed by what they see, accuse Governments, mainly Labor Governments, of dragooning and co – opting the Arts in to service in the fulfilment of activities that run completely counter to their mission statements as Arts organisations. One Arts consultant has put things thus on her LinkedIn account:

Taking its lead from the Australian Government, arts and cultural organisations have recently discovered a newfound duty to preserve ‘social cohesion’ – over and above their stated purpose or values, and apparently redefined to mean social consensus, conformity and coercion. Australia has entered its ‘cultural McCarthyism’ era, characterised by rising authoritarianism, regressive legislative change, deepening cultural unsafety, racism and religious intolerance, and an unprecedented increase in arts and cultural censorship. At last count, 66 Australian arts and cultural organisations initiatives and groups have been accused of many more instances of censoring, threatening or otherwise harming their own artists, cultural workers or audiences between 2023 and 2026 alone (on top of many others harmed by those outside our sector). This has not only happened in the time of Revive, but been explicitly enacted by Premiers, Ministers and statutory authorities (amongst others) – making hypocrites of policy makers, funders and cultural organisations, and increasing the risks they hoped their actions would avoid. Prioritisation of such problematic and inconsistent definitions of ‘social cohesion’ over organisational purpose and basic human rights must be immediately stopped and reversed – and its devastating impacts repaired.

How can one even begin to rationally consider such matters, without firstly acknowledging that the flashpoint for much of this was a speaking engagement, at a literary event, by a Palestinian writer? And how can one look at those events [plural, because that particular Palestinian writer has earned the ire and the condemnation of not one Labor State Premier, but two] without also noting that the ABC terminated the employment of one of its journalists, of Lebanese cultural heritage? Those actions from the ABC were seemingly prompted by phone calls made to the ABC Chair, and the

eventual cost to the Australian taxpayer from the ABC management's illegal actions was somewhere north of \$2.6M.

'Cultural McCarthyism' may seem like a harsh epithet, but 180 writers pulled out of the Adelaide Writer's Festival. Expressing opinions and listening to diverse voices is in fact the core purpose of the Arts sector. And it is difficult to conclude anything other than that the recent Government actions, in the name of 'social cohesion', are very McCarthyist in nature.

The three-page long Government response to ***Towards Fairness***, states as follows:

The 2023 Mapping Social Cohesion report of the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute found that Australians maintained an overwhelmingly positive view of multiculturalism. Nearly 90 per cent of those surveyed agreed that "multiculturalism has been good for Australia", while 86 per cent agreed that "immigrants are generally good for Australia's economy"

Things have soured considerably since then, and one imagines that the ***2026 Mapping Social Cohesion Report*** when it comes out will reveal some starkly different findings from earlier annual reports - <https://scanloninstitute.org.au/research/mapping-social-cohesion/#reports>.

Returning to Schultz, she asserts as follows:

It is time to resume the national seminar on Australian identity that John Howard deliberately shut down. To take a critical eye to our history, to describe values so they reach beyond motherhood statements, rebuild the social, economic and cultural infrastructure that encourages civic participation and allows power and decision-making authority to be shared. It requires politicians to be boldly inclusive, embrace civic values, remake flawed institutions....

In 2022, for the first time in decades, the government commissioned a review of multiculturalism, ***Towards Fairness***. It found Australia had muddled on, but squandered its world-leading status and recommended the government create a minister, a permanent commission and department for multiculturalism....

She [Aly] issued a call to all Australians to reimagine multiculturalism, and the real social cohesion that would befit the title of the most successful multicultural nation in the world....

A month later the Bondi shooting occurred, the threat that many had feared, to Australians of Jewish heritage, became manifest. The push back against Australians of Islamic faith who were equally horrified by the attack, escalated. Social cohesion became the phrase du jour as Australia struggled to make sense of the horror and ensure it never be repeated.

Aly's vision of how social cohesion and multiculturalism could really deliver the promise on rights to cultural identity, equal opportunity, fair treatment and the recognition of migrants diverse skills and talents, was lost in the noise.

It is hard to disagree with Schultz's view that '[Australia had muddled on, but squandered its world-leading status](#)'. Governments, for a range of reasons, mostly economic and budgetary, have for many years been running large immigration programs. But such programs had not been accompanied by up-to-date reviews of multiculturalism. And when such a review was finally handed to Government, the Government failed to act. As a result, in the wake of the terrorist event, Australia now finds itself exposed to the worst excesses of racism, assimilationism and populist politics. The most marginalised and the most vulnerable are, as they always are, the first to be demonised.

It has been, in no small part, government inaction around the principles Connection; Identity and Belonging; and Inclusion that has brought us to where we are. Implementing most, if not all, of the 29 recommendations from ***Towards Fairness*** is essential towards moving us beyond the difficulties that we currently face.

The ***Towards Fairness*** report was published in April 2024, and thus the authors of that report could not have foreseen the specifics of events occurring in Australia in 2025 and 2026. But multiculturalism in Australia has a 50-year long history and the report authors trace the waxing and waning of multiculturalism over these 50 years.

Aly, and many others, have commented on the anomaly of having a highly urbanised, small population located sparsely on an island continent located in the Asia – Pacific region and peopled by white, Anglo – Saxon, Christian folk. There are all too obvious risks and downsides for any nation that is not integrated in to, and stands separate from, the geographical region wherein it sits. In other words, the justifications for multiculturalism extend well beyond the purely economic, and they extend to the broader concept of a nation belonging in its region.

But notwithstanding this fairly self – evident and apparent reality, discourse around multiculturalism is often highly reductionist. Multiculturalism is, naturally, closely linked with immigration. And that close link is perhaps intensified by the fact that Australia continues to run a historically fairly high level of immigration intake, a significant proportion of which consists of overseas students and others here on temporary visas of one form or another. So, what we see articulated most frequently are arguments in favour of immigration, from the likes of the Business

Council of Australia, based on purely economic arguments. And at the other end of the spectrum we see arguments against immigration, on the basis of housing, but also on the basis of various expressions of the view that ‘they don’t belong here’ and ‘they don’t assimilate.’

Whilst there have indeed been many ‘changing tides’ for multiculturalism over the decades, the authors of ***Towards Fairness*** draw attention to a troubling drift that commenced in the mid – 1990s:

Under the Howard government in the mid-1990s there was a shift from using the term ‘multiculturalism’ to emphasising concepts such as ‘harmony’ – an approach entrenched in the Harmony Day initiative still celebrated today. Harmony Day was introduced as a response to changing social attitudes to multiculturalism, exemplified by the rise of the One Nation party on a platform of opposition to immigration from Asian countries, multiculturalism, and policies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ... Initiatives like Harmony Week signalled a shift in the method and substance of multicultural policies. Although there was ongoing support for multiculturalism, the concept became fragmented as government efforts often lacked substantial resource allocation and embraced different interpretations and focuses. Instead of significant investment, various advisory bodies produced reports and organised communications initiatives such as statements or anti-racism campaigns.

These measures, while needed, were not adequate and failed to prepare the nation to respond to the broader community impact of counter-terrorism measures and asylum-seeker policies.

This limited focus led to a noticeable departure from traditional multiculturalism, signalling the start of a challenging phase for multiculturalism.

[pages 22, 23, ***Towards Fairness***]

The concerns expressed above serve to reinforce Schultz’s earlier commentary that ‘Australia had muddled on, but squandered its world-leading status.’

Whilst much of this drift may have occurred under the Liberals, it is undeniable that the Labor Government has been equally slow to act. Paul Kelly, that doyen of conservative journalists, characterises the situation as ‘an inexcusable gift to Pauline Hanson, courtesy of the Albanese government. Labor deserves much of the blame and should be held to account.’ ***The Great Immigration Showdown, Weekend Australian***; 09 May 2026: 20.

Kelly, being the conservative that he is, then describes an ‘erosion of social cohesion with an entrenched antisemitism’ – all the while making no mention of the huge impacts on Australia’s Islamic community. Nor does Kelly make any mention of the fact these impacts on Australia’s multicultural community are occurring at the same time as there is a current Federal Parliamentary Inquiry in to racism, hate, and violence against First Nations people. It would seem self – evidently obvious that Jewish people are not especially susceptible to racism in Australia. This is not to in any way trivialise the nature of the all too obvious anti- semitism. But it is to make the quite self – evident point that Islamic Australians and Indigenous Australians are also subject to appalling levels of racism in this country. The silences and omissions from Kelly are telling indictments of the fact that he is blinded by ideology.

Mark Naglazas, writing on social media on 11 May 2026 levels the following criticism of Kelly:

Kelly might be right on the immigration numbers impacting housing. But to say that our Australian culture is being watered down by all the non-white, non-Christian immigrants and they are bringing with them anti-semitism with them is ludicrous.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1avHwYSpbT/>

Kelly is a conservative ideologue, who is blinded by his ideology. Yet, for all of that, the following comments from Kelly are nonetheless worth consideration:

In his recent Australian Values Migration Plan, Taylor, after declaring his support for immigration, said people with the “wrong motivations” who had “subversive intent” were being allowed entry. The upshot is that Australians “can see the country they love changing for the worse”.

It is true that immigration has borne exaggerated blame for many of our current ills from housing costs to political polarisation – yet it is equally true that it must bear some of the blame, that the current program is losing public support and that it is undermined by a range of policy mistakes.

The point here is not whether this present author agrees with Kelly’s ideology or with the views of Liberal Leader Taylor. The point here is that it is a fact that support for immigration has fallen sharply. Any number of surveys or polls reveal that fact. And alongside of that fact, recent migrants to this nation are now being blamed for all manner of ills besetting this nation. There are in Australia political parties and media companies that exist primarily as vehicles for manufacturing outrage and hatred directed at Australians who are not white, Anglo Saxon Christians. The **2026 Mapping Social Cohesion** report of the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute will certainly reveal a troubling and worrying decline in regards to indicators of social cohesion.

Whatever Kelly's shortcomings and whatever his blind spots are, this much is right:

the current program is losing public support and that it is undermined by a range of policy mistakes.

Kelly's article is disingenuous, if not actually mischievous. It is deeply unsatisfactory and intellectually lazy, as he does not specify what the policy mistakes were or what the policy solutions might be.

Let me rectify the shortcomings in Kelly's article.

First and foremost amongst the policy mistakes by Government has been government inaction around the principles of Connection; Identity and Belonging; and Inclusion. At a time of elevated migration levels over a protracted period of time, Government was very slow to commission a review of multiculturalism. And when it did receive the report from such a review, in mid 2024, the Labor Government failed to act on that review.

The ***Multicultural Framework Review Australian Government Response*** from 2024 states as follows:

Foundations for future generations: the Government response

The Panel made 29 recommendations, noting the particular importance of data, research and evaluation to underpin future work. The recommendations emerge from three core principles of the Review:

- **Connection** – setting the foundations of a multicultural Australia through leadership, planning, and accountability between three tiers of government and communities.
- **Identity and belonging** – creating a welcoming Australia through English language programs, citizenship policy, and participation in arts, culture, sports, and media. Experiences of discrimination and racism comprise the second of the top ten themes identified in submissions to the Review.
- **Inclusion** – building cultural capability into public services, modernising grant programs, ensuring digital inclusion, ensuring a sustainable language services sector, and meeting the unique needs of young people and regional areas.

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/multicultural-framework-review/australian-government-response>

Implementing most, if not all, of the 29 recommendations from ***Towards Fairness*** is essential towards moving Australia beyond the difficulties that it currently faces.

Appendix Four:

Reference Documents

Excerpts From The 2024 *Multicultural Framework Review Australian Government Response*

Foundations for future generations: the Government response

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- Connection – setting the foundations of a multicultural Australia through leadership, planning, and accountability between three tiers of government and communities.
- Identity and belonging – creating a welcoming Australia through English language programs, citizenship policy, and participation in arts, culture, sports, and media. Experiences of discrimination and racism comprise the second of the top ten themes identified in submissions to the Review.
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<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/multicultural-framework-review/australian-government-response>

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<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/multicultural-framework-review/towards-fairness>

- From our Indigenous heritages etched into the earth and landforms, to our extensive migrant history, we know that multiculturalism is Australia's founding, most enduring and uniting strength. It is important that all Australian governments and citizens recognise this truth, celebrate it, and do what we can to nurture and grow our shared multicultural identity. Unfortunately, this truth is too little recognised or valued in our writings on Australian history and our projections about what Australia can become. We consistently fail to elevate the multicultural lives and stories – the binding agent of our social cohesiveness. We grapple with revealing and investing in the strength of our multiculturalism because we grapple with a reckoning of the parallel, painful history of our often violent attempts to eradicate anything deemed counter to Western Anglo society. Through legal and political structures, processes both overt and subtle have enabled Anglo dominance while reducing the significance of other cultures. [Page 8 – Foreword by Social Justice Commissioner]
- This Review sets out a necessarily ambitious framework for Australia's multicultural future for the Australian Government's consideration. Embarking on a much-needed national conversation following the COVID-19 global pandemic and other international events that have profoundly impacted Australian society, the Review presents a blueprint for addressing existing, emerging and future challenges. As such, the report will contribute to the government's implementation of a multi-decade multicultural framework, strengthening Australia's social fabric and economic prosperity by building on our productive and evolving multicultural society. [Page 10, Letter from the Panel to the Minister, Minister Giles]
- The principles of mutual respect and equality embedded in multiculturalism are not privileges reserved for a select few; they are fundamental indicators of societal wellbeing for all and a way of fostering a thriving, harmonious community. This report urges proactive steps in building a resilient multicultural nation that can effectively address contemporary challenges, including recent events that highlight the need to embrace diversity. Our openness to welcoming this opportunity and the challenges of our time will shape us now and shape the future success and unity of our country. We all have a role as members of this era and this nation. [Page 11, Executive Summary]
- Today, while multiculturalism is generally accepted, the policy approach has become fragmented and the institutional arrangement remains structured so that securitisation overshadows necessary social and economic factors that are complementary to achieving social cohesion and national unity. We need change: Australia needs a multiculturalism

framework that responds to the opportunities and challenges of our times and our changing demographic composition and meets the aspirations expressed in consultations and submissions to this Review. [Page 24 - Securitisation of multiculturalism]

- the predominant view conveyed to the Panel – including from other regional communities – is that multiculturalism is integral to enhancing the social life, cohesion and mutual understanding of communities across Australia. [page 34]
- Although unity has been both a constant theme and goal throughout considerations of multiculturalism in Australia, today's concerns can be exacerbated by international conflicts, beliefs, and troubling representations and interpretations in the media, including social media. Whatever approaches are adopted, the new context of social media and hyper-connectivity is a reminder of the need for thinking about the design of activities and of collaboration in addressing these matters. [Page 37 - Troubling events undermining our unity]
- Cultural programs and government initiatives to bolster communities not only preserve cultural heritage but create spaces where different cultures can thrive and contribute to the nation more broadly. Cultural expression enables belonging, where heritage and traditions contribute positively to a community's richness and diversity and provide a sense of continuity and pride. However, heritage and traditions can also create challenges. Differing cultural values and practices may lead to misunderstandings or conflicts. Navigating these complexities is crucial; otherwise, people's sense of belonging to the broader society will suffer. Art and creative cultural expression are vital in exploring and affirming cultural identity, serving as powerful mediums for communicating experiences, values and perspectives, transcending linguistic and other barriers. In the context of belonging, art becomes a universal language that not only showcases the uniqueness of various cultures but also highlights shared human experiences, fostering a deeper understanding and connection among diverse groups. Creativity is a powerful resource [...] to address divisions in society, promote mutual understanding, support cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing and build a modern shared Australian identity.³⁶ Belonging is built on shared values – values that resonate across different cultures and backgrounds. It is about recognising and appreciating the richness that cultural identities bring to the mosaic that is multicultural Australia. [Page 39 - Belonging: how we feel at home]
- Storytelling serves as a powerful medium to share experiences perspectives and cultural heritage. By having an active role in shaping storytelling policies, multicultural communities can ensure their voices are heard their stories are represented authentically and their narratives are given the respect and recognition they deserve.⁴³ Furthermore, the narrative of 'othering', where certain groups are perceived as fundamentally different or outside the societal norm, has become entrenched in many societies. This narrative, often subtly woven into the fabric of language, plays a significant role in how individuals perceive themselves and others.

Challenging and redefining this narrative is essential in moving towards a more inclusive and diverse society. [Page 41 Perceptions and narratives]

- At the forefront of the treatment of social and multicultural policy is the impact on social cohesion. Effective policymaking in multicultural settings demands an acute awareness of diverse cultural, religious and linguistic differences. The success of these policies is measured in their implementation and reception by the communities they intend to serve. Policies fostering equitable access and recognising diverse needs can enhance social cohesion, while those overlooking these aspects inadvertently fuel division. [Page 41 – Social policies and belonging]
- The realm of the arts holds a unique and powerful place in fostering a sense of belonging within Australian multicultural communities. Artistic expression, whether through visual arts, music, theatre or literature, provides a universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers. The arts can be a tool for showcasing diverse cultural heritages and fostering a shared community identity. Initiatives such as community-driven arts projects, multicultural festivals and museum exhibitions offer spaces where diverse narratives and histories are told and celebrated. These artistic platforms enable individuals from various backgrounds to connect with each other's experiences, fostering empathy and understanding. Moreover, participation in and appreciation of different art forms help in breaking down stereotypes, challenging prejudices, and building a more cohesive and inclusive society. [Page 46 The arts and belonging]
- Whether creating or experiencing art, art can be an authentic, personal expression of culture or something that whole communities can enjoy together. Creative Australia, the Australian Government's principal arts investment and advisory body, aptly explains the benefits of art and creativity as 'a powerful resource to strengthen multiculturalism in Australia. It offers an expression of our humanity and of the many perspectives, cultures and identities that make up our Australian community'. There is significant opportunity to harness the power of arts and culture and the talents of culturally diverse practitioners to address divisions in society, promote mutual understanding, support cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing, and build a modern shared Australian identity. But for creative work to be its best and be relevant to contemporary Australia, Creative Australia in their submission to the Panel explains that 'we need it to be accessible, and for Australians of all backgrounds and experiences to participate as audiences, creators, workers and leaders. There is strong evidence that while diverse communities are highly engaged in arts and culture, many are under-represented within cultural institutions and leadership.'⁶⁹ The Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, Revive, contributes to whole-of-government outcomes of multiculturalism, social cohesion and inclusion. It provides a

pathway to centre culture and creativity in the Multicultural Framework by harnessing culture's impact on Australia's resilience and wellbeing. [Page 55 - The arts]

- To strengthen multiculturalism through the arts, Creative Australia has put forward a set of recommendations. These are, for the most part, supported in principle, as outlined below. It is worth noting, however, that other submissions we received highlighted a gap in funding for screen between Creative Australia and Screen Australia, which does not fund community initiatives in respect to accessing core multi-year funding. [Page 55 - The arts]
- Recommendation 8: Creative Australia to undertake a whole-of-government review of investment in community cultural programs.

That Creative Australia, through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts, undertake a whole-of-government review of current investment in community cultural programs and lead the development and implementation of funding and grants programs to target support for:

- community cultural projects (such as exhibitions, public art installations, screenings, workshops) and community-engaged festivals that support the cultural expression of culturally diverse communities
- skills and leadership development to amplify and deepen the professional and community benefits of staging cultural programs, events and festivals
- capacity development, networking and infrastructure that enables effective cultural engagement as a stimulus for more sustained relationships and community development
- more professional development opportunities for diverse cultural leaders, creatives and creative workers. Research shows culturally diverse artists and creative workers experience barriers to workforce participation and leadership, including feeling excluded from cultural venues and organisations, educational institutions, government and funding bodies.

The Panel notes that there is no clear line of responsibility and authority for this recommendation within government, and is therefore recommending that responsibility for implementing it should be given to Creative Australia through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts. [Page 56 - The arts]

- Recommendation 9: Creative Australia to lead development of a pilot multi-year seed fund community-driven creative solutions to social challenges

That Creative Australia, through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts, lead the development of a pilot multi-year seed

fund for community-driven creative solutions to social challenges (including, for example, social isolation and disengagement). This pilot could be co-designed with target communities and delivered by Creative Australia and would involve collaboration with local, state and federal government, industry and philanthropic stakeholders. The Panel notes that there is no clear line of responsibility and authority for this recommendation within government, and is therefore recommending that responsibility for implementing it should be given to Creative Australia through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts. [Page 57 - The arts]

- Recommendation #10: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts to establish a program for community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation That the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts establish a program for multicultural community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation, enabling communities to participate in arts and culture, in recognition of the known benefits of arts and cultural participation for social cohesion. The Panel notes that there is no clear line of responsibility and authority for this recommendation within government, and is therefore recommending that responsibility for implementing it should be given to Creative Australia through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts. [Page 57]
- As a result of the Multicultural Affairs portfolio being positioned on such a micro scale within the Department of Home Affairs, there has been an inability by the multicultural affairs portfolio to influence public policy and government decisions. And the focus of policy and program approaches to culturally and racially marginalised communities has become one of being monitored and managed rather than inclusive and celebratory. It became increasingly clear to the Panel that strategic policy direction to realise the social and economic benefits of multiculturalism for Australia has been consistently overshadowed by a singular security focus, mainly on border security, foreign interference, and countering violent extremism. [Page 59 - Current arrangements – strengths, gaps, weaknesses]
- The initial deep dive highlighted the closely interrelated components of government settlement services and multicultural policy, including the Access and Equity Policy that sits under multicultural policy. Settlement programs are key to delivering accessible and equitable services for people living in Australia. We note the settlement reform work underway, such as service redesign aimed at a more personalised and tailored approach to services, the Refugee and Humanitarian Entrant Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework, and the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot. A key mechanism used to engage across the Australian Government and state and territory governments on settlement issues is

the Senior Officials Settlement Outcomes Group (SOSOG). Other stakeholder engagement is at the international level, such as the Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migrations, Asylum and Refugees.[Page 60 – Deep Dives]

Multicultural Framework Review, Creative Australia Submission

Creative Australia's 9 page long submission in 2023 contained the following four recommendations:

Creative Australia recommends the Department of Home Affairs:

1. Refine current investment programs to target support for:
 - community cultural projects (eg, exhibitions, public art installations, screenings, workshops) and community-engaged festivals that support the cultural expression of culturally diverse communities
 - skills and leadership development to amplify and deepen the professional and community benefits of staging cultural programs, events and festivals.
2. Invest in a pilot multi-year seed fund for community-driven creative solutions to social challenges (including, for example, social isolation and disengagement). This pilot could be co-designed with target communities and delivered by Creative Australia and would involve collaboration with local, state and federal government, industry and philanthropic stakeholders.
3. Establish a program for multicultural community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation, enabling communities to participate in arts and culture, in recognition of the known benefits of arts and cultural participation to social cohesion.
4. Invest in Creative Workplaces (within Creative Australia) to support the development of an industry-wide Fair, Safe and Respectful Framework. This will enable the sector to develop leading practice and consistency for culturally safe workplaces.

TOWARDS FAIRNESS A multicultural Australia for all [2024]

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/multicultural-framework-review/towards-fairness>

This report contains the following three Recommendations relating to funding for multicultural arts:

- **Recommendation 8: Creative Australia to undertake a whole-of-government review of investment in community cultural programs.**

That Creative Australia, through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts, undertake a whole-of-government review of

current investment in community cultural programs and lead the development and implementation of funding and grants programs to target support for:

- community cultural projects (such as exhibitions, public art installations, screenings, workshops) and community-engaged festivals that support the cultural expression of culturally diverse communities
- skills and leadership development to amplify and deepen the professional and community benefits of staging cultural programs, events and festivals
- capacity development, networking and infrastructure that enables effective cultural engagement as a stimulus for more sustained relationships and community development
- more professional development opportunities for diverse cultural leaders, creatives and creative workers. Research shows culturally diverse artists and creative workers experience barriers to workforce participation and leadership, including feeling excluded from cultural venues and organisations, educational institutions, government and funding bodies.

The Panel notes that there is no clear line of responsibility and authority for this recommendation within government, and is therefore recommending that responsibility for implementing it should be given to Creative Australia through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts. [Page 56]

- **Recommendation 9: Creative Australia to lead development of a pilot multi-year seed fund community-driven creative solutions to social challenges**

That Creative Australia, through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts, lead the development of a pilot multi-year seed fund for community-driven creative solutions to social challenges (including, for example, social isolation and disengagement). This pilot could be co-designed with target communities and delivered by Creative Australia and would involve collaboration with local, state and federal government, industry and philanthropic stakeholders. The Panel notes that there is no clear line of responsibility and authority for this recommendation within government, and is therefore recommending that responsibility for implementing it should be given to Creative Australia through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts. [Page 57]

Recommendation 10: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts to establish a program for community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation.

That the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts establish a program for multicultural community organisations to apply for funding to embed an arts and cultural worker in their organisation, enabling communities to participate in arts and culture, in recognition of the known benefits of arts and cultural participation for social cohesion. The Panel notes that there is no clear line of responsibility and authority for this recommendation within government, and is therefore recommending that responsibility for implementing it should be given to Creative Australia through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts.