

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Australia's national cultural policy should unite, not divide.

The "Revive" framework (2023), with its explicit "First Nations First" pillar, risks prioritising the perspectives of Indigenous Australians—who make up roughly 3.8% of the population—over the shared experiences of the overwhelming majority.

While acknowledging Indigenous history and contributions is important, framing a national policy around elevating one group's narratives as "first" while subjecting the broader Australian story to ongoing critique creates imbalance.

True representation means every Australian's heritage counts equally, without hierarchy.

This approach echoes a broader pattern where minority voices are "defended" by implicitly rejecting or relativising the majority culture—the institutions, values, and traditions built by British settlers, post-war migrants, and generations of everyday Australians that underpin modern prosperity.

Policies like this can foster resentment rather than cohesion, turning culture into a zero-sum game of grievance instead of a common inheritance.

Bob Hawke understood this danger. In his 1988 Bicentenary address and related speeches on multiculturalism, the former Labor Prime Minister delivered a clear vision of equality:

"In Australia there is no hierarchy of descent: there must be no privilege of origin. The commitment is all. The commitment to Australia is the only thing needful to be a true Australian."

Hawke celebrated diversity as enrichment within a unified nation. He rejected any notion of second-class citizens based on ancestry or length of residence. For him, being Australian meant loyalty to shared values—fair go, democracy, rule of law—not descent or identity-based claims.

His multiculturalism was integrative, not fragmenting.

It built on the stable framework that allowed waves of migrants to thrive while maintaining national cohesion.

Today's policy landscape often strays from Hawke's principle.

By placing "First Nations First" at the centre of cultural funding, storytelling, and arts infrastructure, it suggests some stories matter more in the national narrative.

This inverts Hawke's "no privilege of origin."

It implies the majority (over 96% of Australians, including diverse migrant communities) must defer or self-flagellate, while minority perspectives receive elevated status.

Such policies don't heal; they institutionalise division.

A better path honours Hawke's wisdom.

A revised national cultural policy should:

- Celebrate all stories without ranking by historical grievance.
- Recognise Indigenous pre-colonial history accurately, without weaponising it against the present.
- Affirm the contributions of European settlement, migrant waves, and the democratic institutions that define Australia.

- Prioritise excellence, accessibility, and shared identity over identity politics.

We have strong European and Asian heritage and need to commitment to Australia unites us.

No group—minority or otherwise—should claim primacy in national policy at the expense of others.

Equality demands one standard for all. Policies that defend minorities by sidelining the majority betray the unifying spirit Hawke championed.

Australians deserve a cultural vision that represents the whole nation, not a reordered hierarchy.

I disagree with the policy!

I'm both Convict and indigenous ancestry I would never preference one over the other!

I am a mixed race 27 year old; who wants no more of racial persecution!