

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Over many years as a professional glass artist, I have built a career that has brought substantial commission income into Australia from overseas clients. My unique glass sculptures are highly regarded internationally and held in collections around the world including the Australian Parliament House Collection. While this recognition is deeply rewarding, the financial reality of sustaining an artistic practice remains extremely unstable.

Like many professional artists, my income is highly irregular. Some years are financially successful, while in others I struggle to maintain stability despite almost three decades of experience, international recognition, and a well-established practice. This uncertainty is not a reflection of commitment or professionalism; it is a structural reality of working in the arts.

Glass art and craft practice also require an enormous long-term investment of time, training, and resources. Developing the technical skills needed to work at a professional level takes many years of dedicated practice and specialised knowledge. The cost of establishing and maintaining a fully equipped glass studio is extremely high, including kilns, tools and equipment, materials, insurance, and ongoing energy costs. Unlike many other professions, artists are often expected to absorb these substantial expenses personally, with little security or support.

I have invested my life savings into building my practice and have had to develop strong entrepreneurial and business skills simply to survive. Beyond creating artwork, I employ and mentor emerging makers, share specialist knowledge, and contribute to the cultural and economic life of my local community. My studio is not only a business, but also a place of inspiration, education, and cultural enrichment.

Three very important policy areas for me are:

Universal Basic Income for Artists: A universal artist income would provide essential stability and acknowledge the significant contribution artists make to Australia's cultural identity, economy, education, and community wellbeing.

Fairer Tax Policies: Better tax policies would also make a meaningful difference. In particular, grants and prizes should not be taxed, as these forms of support are essential investments in sustaining artistic practice, not personal windfalls. Comparable support structures in sport are often treated far more fairly.

Copyright Protections and AI: There must also be stronger protections for artists' intellectual property and creative output in the age of artificial intelligence. Artists' works are increasingly being used to train AI systems without permission, attribution, or compensation. This raises serious concerns about copyright, authorship, and the long-term sustainability of creative careers.

The government must ensure that artists retain control over how their work is used and that existing copyright protections are strengthened and properly enforced in relation to AI technologies. Creative work should not be treated as free raw material for commercial AI development without the consent of the artists who produced it.

Australia benefits enormously from the work of professional artists, both culturally and economically. Policy settings should better recognise the realities of creative careers and support artists to continue making this vital contribution nationally and internationally.