

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The development of a successor to Revive is a genuinely significant moment. For the first time in Australian history, a national cultural policy has survived into a second term of government - making this the first-ever opportunity to build consecutive, compounding cultural policy, rather than starting from scratch each electoral cycle. That institutional continuity deserves to be protected and deepened.

The five pillars of Revive provide a workable framework, but several tensions remain unresolved.

First Nations First is the policy's most important and most fragile commitment. Placing First Nations culture at the centre is the right instinct, but centring must mean genuine decision-making power, not symbolic positioning. The new policy should move beyond tokenism toward structural resource sovereignty - where First Nations arts organisations control their own funding relationships, rather than being mediated through settler-run bodies.

Centrality of the Artist is a pillar that risks remaining rhetorical without meaningful reform to artist income and working conditions. Australia's creative workforce remains chronically underpaid, with arts workers disproportionately reliant on unpredictable project-based funding. The new policy should link cultural investment explicitly to fair pay standards, superannuation compliance, and accessible artist welfare provisions — including better interaction with the social security system for those with non-linear incomes.

Strong Cultural Infrastructure needs to grapple honestly with the geographic concentration of funding. Major cultural institutions are overwhelmingly metropolitan, while regional arts organisations face chronic underfunding and workforce shortages. The successor policy should set measurable targets for regional investment parity, not aspirational language.

A Place for Every Story and Engaging the Audience together raise the most pressing contemporary question the new policy must address: the role of artificial intelligence. Generative AI is already reshaping how cultural content is produced, distributed, and discovered — largely without the consent or compensation of the human creators whose work trained these systems. A credible National Cultural Policy must take a clear position on AI and intellectual property, not defer the question. This includes supporting legislative reform to close loopholes that currently allow large-scale scraping of Australian creative works without remuneration.

Finally, the consultation process itself deserves scrutiny. The government has indicated AI tools will be used to identify common themes from submissions - a choice that has drawn sharp criticism from cultural sector voices who argue this approach fundamentally undermines the legitimacy of a process meant to centre human creative expression. If the government is serious about the Centrality of the Artist as a pillar, the policy development process should model that value - with human readers, transparent analysis, and published thematic reports.