

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Organisation



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

State and Federal Government continually decreases year on year indicating the deprioritisation of arts and culture in Australia. The Australian Government continues to direct greater investment to politicised 'priority' industries that employ fewer people to provide fewer outcomes across fewer portfolio areas. This is a choice, not an evidence-based strategy.

This disparity is also felt within the sector itself, with more investment going to prop up failing cultural institutions than small-to-medium sized (S2M) organisations, which consistently outperform their larger counterparts in terms of reach, representation, access and return on investment. Government spending on arts and culture should be proportionate to evidence over lobbying interests, and impact over unquestioned legacy – with a particular focus on increasing support for S2M organisations and individual artists.

A renewed national cultural policy must take a coordinated national approach that maintains and expands existing arts infrastructure alongside a significant increase in multi-year operational, administrative and capacity-building support for S2M organisations.

As a festival that focuses on the exhibition of underrepresented Australian stories, pillar 5 is significant and while there have been some important developments in this, more needs to be done to support a diverse exhibition ecology – support for the ways and places to create, discover and engage with local stories. Telling Australian stories is crucial for our national identity and culture, and the individual wellbeing that comes from seeing ourselves reflected on stage, page and screen.

Revive has begun to address this issue with new Australian content requirements for online streaming services, who will soon be required to invest 10% of local expenditure or 7.5% of local revenue in new Australian content. This work needs to expand to include phased increases of new, scripted screen content quotas to 25% (with any shortfall paid as a levy to Screen Australia or Creative Australia to distribute to the sector) and the strengthening of public broadcaster obligations (such as ABC drama investment), alongside similar local content requirements for other art forms.

Importantly however, audience development and diversification initiatives also need to ensure that digital initiatives don't replace on-site delivery of arts and cultural programs and events. These are crucial for building social connection, empowering communities and feeding into local economies.

Finally, a renewed national cultural policy must reinvest in arts education pathways at all levels, including: entry-level participation campaigns for all art forms and age groups; working with education departments to restore arts education as a core component of K-12 schooling, not an elective afterthought; requiring all Australian schools have a library, resourcing them (given 20% of schools currently operate with a \$0 annual library budget and 43% on less than \$1,000 per year), and employing working artists and writers in schools and public libraries; rescinding the 2020 Job-ready Graduates reforms that doubled the cost of humanities degrees; and re-introducing support for vocational pathways, including more accredited arts training courses in more locations (from TAFE and other providers), and investment in non-accredited and informal training opportunities (provided by peak bodies and service organisations).