

Date: 24 May 2026

Pasifika Advocacy Australia Incorporated (PAA)

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SUBMISSION TO THE NEW NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY (2026)

Pasifika Advocacy Australia (PAA) Incorporated

Submitted by:

Pasifika Advocacy Australia (PAA) Incorporated Brisbane, Queensland (with the assistance of Carmel Riethmuller)

To:

The Hon. Minister for the Arts Australian Government

Title:

Strengthening Australia’s Cultural Future:

A National Framework for First Nations Leadership, Cultural Infrastructure, Pasifika Representation and Audience Engagement

Summary Statement

This submission presents a comprehensive, evidence-based framework to strengthen Australia’s cultural landscape through investment in First Nations leadership, national cultural infrastructure, Pasifika cultural centres, digital inclusion, youth pathways, and regional cultural diplomacy. It outlines practical, scalable recommendations aligned with the five pillars of *Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place*, and positions Australia to lead the Pacific region in cultural innovation, participation and sustainability.

Submitted by:

**Pasifika Advocacy Australia (PAA) Incorporated**  
**Representing Pasifika communities across Australia.**

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## **SUBMISSION TO THE NEW NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY (2026)**

**From:** Pasifika Advocacy Australia (PAA) Incorporated

**Submitted by:** Pasifika Advocacy Australia (PAA) Incorporated (with the assistance of Carmel Riethmuller)

**Location:** Moreton Bay, Queensland

**To:** The Hon Minister for the Arts **Australian Government**

### **1. Introduction**

Pasifika Advocacy Australia (PAA) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the new National Cultural Policy. Pasifika peoples have always valued the central role of culture expressed through arts, song, dance, storytelling, film, craft and ceremony. Our cultural practices are living narratives of our ancestors and identity. In this way, Pasifika peoples share deep cultural alignment with Australia's First Nations peoples, whose stories, languages and artistic traditions form the oldest continuous cultural heritage in the world.

The new National Cultural Policy will build on the foundations of **Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place**, and address gaps, emerging priorities, and long-term sustainability. PAA supports this direction and provides this submission to strengthen cultural equity, governance, infrastructure and participation across Australia.

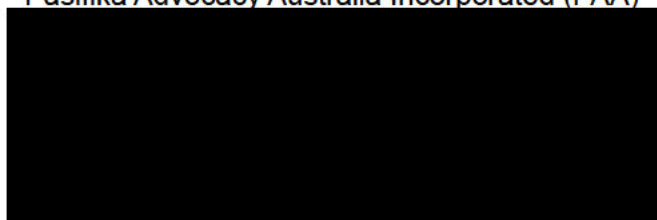
Pasifika communities are one of the fastest-growing cultural populations in Australia. Based on analysis of the 2021 ABS Census:

- Australia is home to 337,000 people of Pacific heritage
- The Pasifika population has almost doubled since 2006
- Queensland is home to 120,000–130,000 Pasifika people
- The Moreton Bay Region alone has 20,000–25,000 Pasifika residents
- The Northern Territory has 8,000–10,000 Pasifika residents, with 70–80% growth since 2011

Despite this rapid growth, Pasifika communities remain under-represented in national cultural frameworks and under-resourced in cultural infrastructure. This submission outlines practical, culturally grounded recommendations aligned with the five pillars of Revive.



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## Summary of Recommendations

Pasifika Advocacy Australia (PAA) proposes the following priority actions to strengthen Australia's National Cultural Policy and ensure cultural equity, participation and long-term sustainability:

### 1. Strengthen First Nations Leadership

1. Embed First Nations cultural protocol in all state events, diplomatic engagements and national ceremonies.
2. Establish national guidelines for cultural protocol co-designed with First Nations communities.
3. Invest in school-based and university-based cultural infrastructure to support cultural identity, language and intergenerational learning.

### 2. Build a National Network of Cultural Centres

4. Establish a National First Nations Cultural Centre in NSW.
5. Establish Pasifika Cultural Centres in Queensland and the Northern Territory.
6. Develop major cultural centres in every state and territory to reflect local cultural strengths and support tourism.

### 3. Strengthen the Centrality of Artists

7. Create dedicated Pasifika funding streams within Creative Australia.
8. Support Pasifika youth arts, digital media and cultural leadership pathways.
9. Recognise sport as cultural practice within national cultural policy.
10. Ensure Pasifika representation in national arts boards, advisory groups and leadership roles.

### 4. Invest in Cultural Infrastructure & Regional Leadership

11. Develop a National Cultural Convention Centre capable of hosting FestPAC and major cultural events.
12. Support year-round cultural festivals, arts markets, digital storytelling and creative technology programs.



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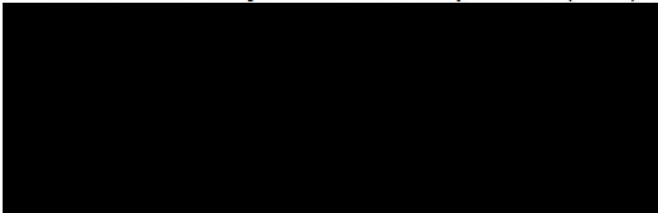
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## **5. Expand Cultural Participation & Audience Engagement**

13. Introduce subsidised cultural access for young people and disadvantaged communities.
14. Invest in digital inclusion: mobile cultural units, livestreaming, virtual exhibitions and community Wi-Fi.
15. Support hybrid festivals, outdoor cultural events and youth-led digital content.
16. Integrate cultural participation into education, housing, youth services and community programs.

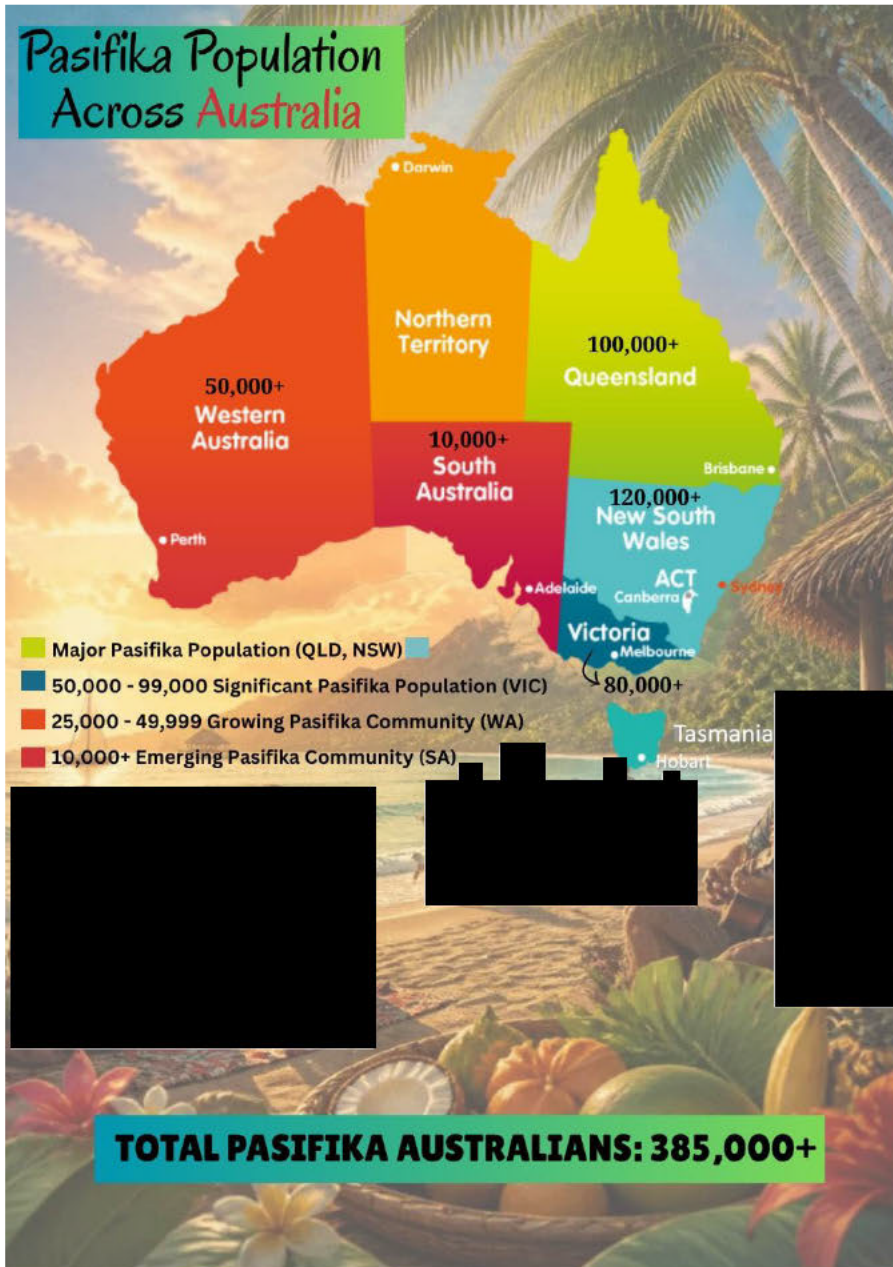
## **6. Strengthen Partnerships & Long-Term Sustainability**

17. Establish long-term, community-led funding agreements with First Nations and Pasifika communities.
18. Support community-controlled governance models for cultural programs and infrastructure.
19. Develop a national cultural participation strategy aligned with regional diplomacy and the Pacific Step-Up.



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**Map 1: Pasifika Population Across Australia**



*This map shows the national distribution of Pasifika communities across all states and territories. It highlights the scale, growth and geographic spread of Pasifika Australians, reinforcing the need for national cultural infrastructure, representation and policy inclusion*



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## 5. The Case for Investment

Australia’s cultural sector is not only a source of identity and social cohesion—it is a major economic engine, a driver of regional diplomacy, and a foundation for long-term national prosperity. Strengthening cultural infrastructure, participation and representation deliver measurable returns across economic, social and strategic domains.

### 5.1. Economic Return on Investment

Australia’s cultural and creative industries are among the fastest-growing parts of the national economy. According to Creative Australia:

- The cultural and creative sector contributed **\$67.4 billion to GDP in 2023–24**, representing **2.5% of the national economy**.
- The sector grew **6.6% in a single year**, and **62% over the past 15 years**.
- More than **282,000 workers** and **95,700 creative businesses** rely on cultural infrastructure, audiences and participation.

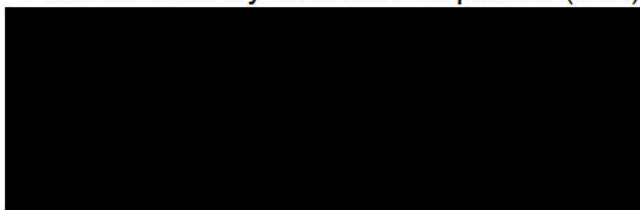
Investment in cultural centres, festivals, digital access and creative pathways directly supports:

- job creation
- tourism and hospitality
- regional development
- small business growth
- youth employment
- creative industry expansion

International evidence reinforces this. The Polynesian Cultural Centre in Hawai’i generates hundreds of jobs and attracts over 700,000 visitors annually, demonstrating the economic potential of culturally grounded tourism.

Hosting FestPAC in Australia would generate:

- significant tourism revenue
- increased hotel occupancy
- hospitality and retail uplift
- creative industry contracts



- 
- international media exposure

Comparable global cultural festivals generate **\$100–\$300 million** in host-city economic activity.

## 5.2. Strengthening Australia’s Pacific Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy is now central to Australia’s regional engagement. The Pacific Step-Up, the Pacific Engagement Visa, and DFAT’s cultural diplomacy strategy all emphasise:

- deeper people-to-people relationships
- cultural exchange
- regional leadership
- shared prosperity

Investing in Pasifika cultural infrastructure and hosting FestPAC would:

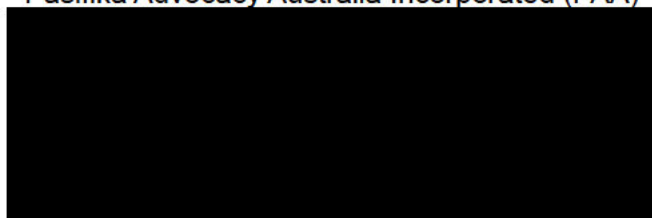
- strengthen Australia’s standing as a trusted Pacific partner
- reinforce regional stability and cooperation
- support soft-power influence
- deepen ties with Pacific governments, artists and communities
- align with Australia’s foreign policy priorities

FestPAC 2028 is already being positioned by the Pacific Tourism Organisation as a **global cultural tourism showcase**. Australia has a strategic opportunity to lead.

## 5.3. Social and Community Benefits

Cultural participation is strongly linked to:

- improved mental health
- youth engagement
- community resilience
- reduced social isolation
- stronger intercultural understanding
- increased school attendance and educational outcomes



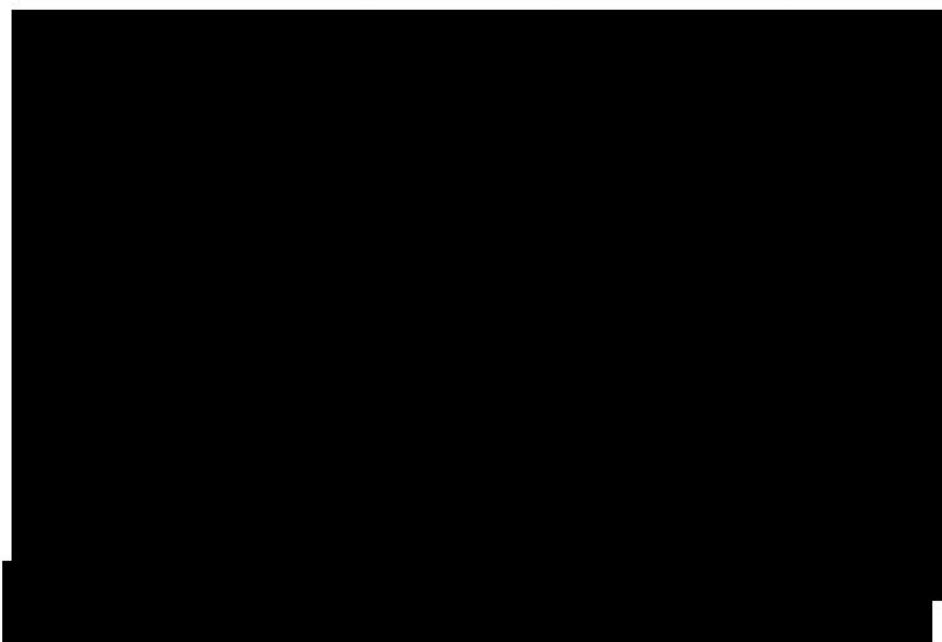
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For Pasifika communities—one of the fastest-growing cultural populations in Australia—investment in cultural infrastructure and pathways supports:

- identity and belonging
- intergenerational knowledge transfer
- youth leadership
- community cohesion
- crime prevention and early intervention
- workforce participation

*Pasifika Vibes Festival City of Moreton Bay – Lawnton Showgrounds*

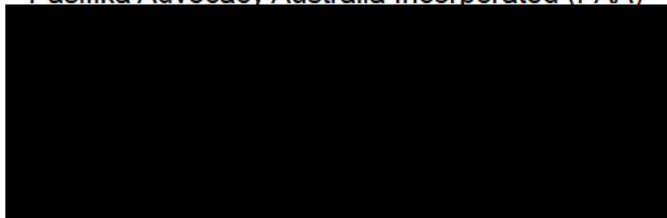


*This photograph demonstrates the need for cultural infrastructure in the City of Moreton Bay, because of the fast-growing city .*

#### **5.4. Addressing Structural Inequity**

Despite rapid population growth, Pasifika communities remain:

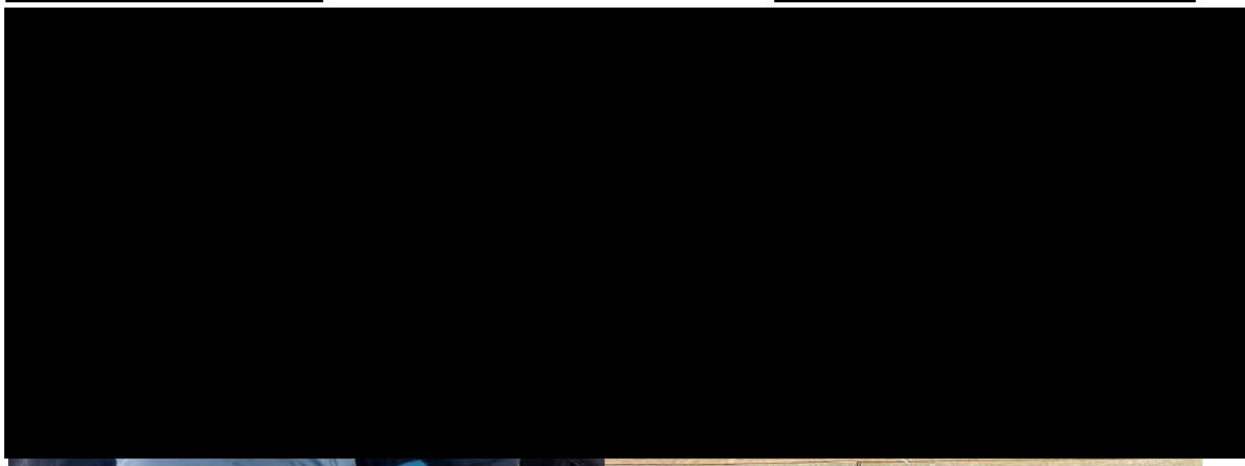
- under-represented in national cultural frameworks
- under-resourced in cultural infrastructure



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- under-funded in creative pathways
  - under-represented in leadership roles

Investment now prevents widening inequity and ensures that Australia’s cultural policy reflects the diversity of its population.



*These photographs demonstrate the lack of appropriate cultural facilities and cultural space as well as provide training and education to the communities and Pasifika Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) workers.*

### **5.5. A High-Value, Low-Risk Investment**

Cultural infrastructure and participation programs deliver:

- high economic multipliers
- strong community support
- bipartisan appeal
- long-term legacy outcomes
- alignment with existing national priorities

These investments are low-risk, high-impact, and politically durable.



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## **6. Why Now? A Strategic Moment for National Cultural Leadership**

Australia is at a pivotal moment in its cultural, demographic and regional trajectory. The timing for investment in cultural infrastructure, participation and representation is not only appropriate—it is strategically essential.

### **6.1. Rapid Population Growth and Demographic Change**

Pasifika communities are one of the fastest-growing cultural populations in Australia:

- **337,000 people of Pacific heritage nationwide**
- **Population has almost doubled since 2006**
- **120,000–130,000 Pasifika people in Queensland**
- **20,000–25,000 in the Moreton Bay Region alone**
- **70–80% growth in the Northern Territory since 2011**

This growth creates both opportunity and urgency. Without investment in cultural infrastructure, digital access, youth pathways and representation, inequities will widen and cultural participation will decline.

### **6.2. FestPAC 2028 and Regional Momentum**

The Pacific region is preparing for **FestPAC 2028**, now positioned by the Pacific Tourism Organisation as a **global cultural tourism showcase**. Australia must act now to:

- secure a leadership role
- prepare infrastructure
- strengthen partnerships
- position itself as a regional cultural hub

Delaying action risks Australia falling behind New Caledonia, Hawai'i, Fiji and other Pacific nations already investing in cultural tourism and digital storytelling.

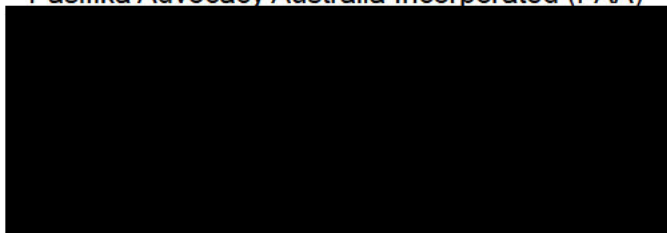
### **6.3. Digital Transformation and Audience Behaviour Shifts**

Creative Australia's research shows that audiences now expect:

- hybrid cultural experiences
- digital access



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- interactive and immersive content
  - low-cost participation
  - youth-led digital storytelling

Without investment in digital inclusion, mobile cultural programs and hybrid festivals, Australia risks excluding regional, remote and low-income communities from cultural life.

#### **6.4. Rising Cost-of-Living Pressures**

Cost is now one of the strongest barriers to cultural participation. Young people and disadvantaged communities are being priced out of:

- festivals
- performances
- exhibitions
- creative programs

Subsidised access and community-based programming are essential to prevent cultural exclusion.

#### **6.5. Strengthening Australia's Pacific Diplomacy**

Australia's Pacific Step-Up, the Pacific Engagement Visa and DFAT's cultural diplomacy strategy all emphasise:

- deeper cultural ties
- people-to-people relationships
- regional leadership
- shared prosperity

Investing now in Pasifika cultural centres, creative pathways and FestPAC-ready infrastructure strengthens Australia's credibility and influence in the region.

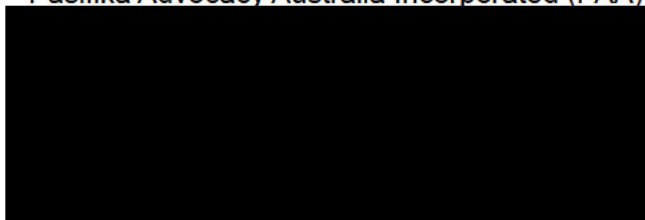
#### **6.6. Youth Opportunity and Risk**

Pasifika communities have some of the youngest age profiles in Australia. Investment now will:

- build youth leadership
- strengthen identity and belonging



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- reduce disengagement
  - support mental health
  - create creative and sporting pathways

Failing to invest risks long-term social and economic costs.

## **7. National Cultural Policy Renewal Cycle**

The National Cultural Policy is being refreshed now. This is the moment to:

- embed Pasifika representation
- strengthen First Nations leadership
- expand cultural infrastructure
- modernise digital access
- prepare for regional cultural leadership

Waiting another five years would mean missing critical opportunities.

### **A National Cultural Infrastructure Map: A Strategic Framework for Australia**

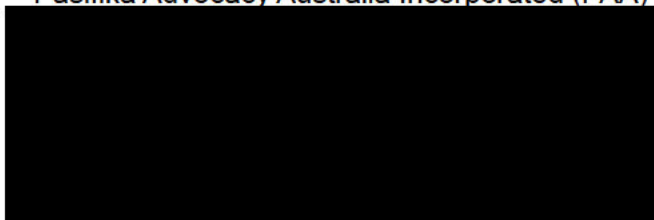
To ensure that every story has a place, Australia requires a coordinated, national approach to cultural infrastructure. The following conceptual map outlines how cultural centres, creative hubs, school-based cultural facilities and digital access points can be distributed across the country to maximise participation, economic benefit and regional leadership.

#### **7.1. New South Wales – National First Nations Cultural Centre (Flagship Site)**

NSW is the natural location for a national First Nations cultural institution due to:

- its population size
- its role as a national tourism gateway
- its proximity to major cultural institutions
- its symbolic importance for national identity

This centre would anchor Australia's cultural diplomacy and serve as the national home for First Nations storytelling, performance, language and ceremony.



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## 7.2. Queensland – Pasifika Cultural Centre (Primary Hub)

Queensland is home to **120,000–130,000 Pasifika people**, including the largest Samoan, Tongan and Fijian communities in Australia. A Pasifika Cultural Centre in Queensland would:

- strengthen Pacific engagement
- support youth pathways
- anchor cultural tourism
- provide rehearsal, performance and digital storytelling spaces

This centre would serve as the national hub for Pasifika arts, culture and regional diplomacy.

## 7.3. Northern Territory – Pasifika Cultural Centre (Northern Hub)

The NT has experienced **70–80% Pasifika population growth since 2011**. A second Pasifika Cultural Centre would:

- support remote and regional communities
- strengthen cultural exchange with Timor-Leste, PNG and the broader Pacific
- provide training, digital access and youth engagement programs

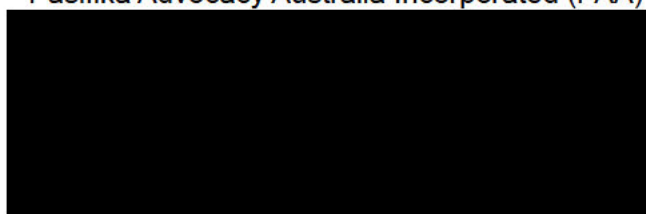
This hub would complement Queensland’s centre and ensure national coverage.

## 7.4. Moreton Bay Region – Youth Cultural Innovation Zone

With **20,000–25,000 Pasifika residents**, Moreton Bay is one of Australia’s largest Pasifika cultural centres. This region is ideal for:

- youth dance and performance hubs
- digital storytelling labs
- community weaving, carving and tattooing spaces
- cultural leadership programs

It would serve as a model for regional cultural infrastructure

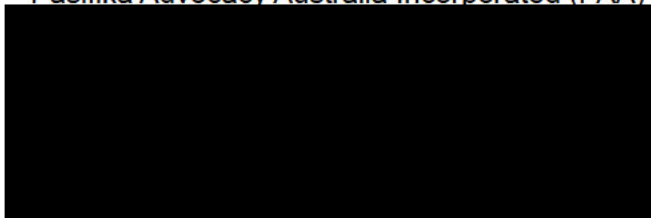


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Map 2: Pasifika Population & Cultural Hubs in Queensland and the Northern Territory



*This map demonstrates the geographic spread and growth of Pasifika communities across northern Australia. It shows how Pasifika Advocacy Australia (PAA) represents communities from **urban centres to remote regions**, connecting cultural hubs through shared heritage, youth leadership, and creative practice. The map supports the submission’s call for **Pasifika Cultural Centres in Queensland and the Northern Territory**, ensuring equitable access to cultural infrastructure and participation.*



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### **7.5. Victoria – Multicultural Creative Industries Hub**

Victoria’s strong creative industries and multicultural population make it ideal for:

- digital media labs
- hybrid festival infrastructure
- multicultural arts markets
- youth innovation programs

This hub would support cross-cultural collaboration and creative entrepreneurship.

### **7.6. Western Australia – Cultural Tourism and Regional Exchange Hub**

WA’s proximity to the Indian Ocean region positions it as a strategic site for:

- cultural tourism
- regional exchange
- outdoor festivals
- Indigenous and Pasifika creative collaborations

This hub would support both domestic and international cultural engagement.

### **7.7. South Australia, Tasmania and ACT – Specialist Cultural Nodes**

These jurisdictions can host:

- specialist arts training centres
- digital access points
- community cultural hubs
- regional touring infrastructure

Each node would reflect local cultural strengths and support national connectivity.

### **7.8. School-Based Cultural Infrastructure (National Network)**

Across all states and territories, schools and universities should host:

- student art museums
- cultural exhibition spaces



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- language and storytelling hubs
  - digital media and creative technology labs

This ensures cultural access for young people regardless of postcode.

### **7.9. Digital Cultural Infrastructure (National Layer)**

A national digital layer overlays the physical map, including:

- mobile cultural units
- livestreaming infrastructure
- virtual exhibitions
- digital storytelling platforms
- community Wi-Fi and digital skills programs

This ensures that remote, regional and mobility-restricted communities are not left behind.

## **8. Risk of Inaction**

Failure to invest in cultural infrastructure, participation pathways and regional cultural leadership carries significant long-term risks for Australia. These risks affect not only Pasifika communities, but national identity, social cohesion, economic growth and Australia's strategic position in the Pacific.

### **8.1. Widening Cultural and Digital Inequity**

Without targeted investment, Pasifika and culturally diverse communities will continue to face:

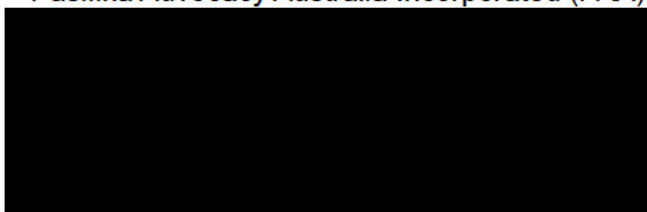
- limited access to cultural spaces
- reduced participation in creative industries
- widening digital divides
- barriers to youth engagement and leadership

This undermines national commitments to equity, inclusion and cultural participation.

### **8.2. Loss of Cultural Knowledge and Language**

Pasifika communities hold deep cultural knowledge, including:

- language



- 
- ceremony
  - dance
  - carving
  - weaving
  - tattooing
  - oral storytelling

Without infrastructure and pathways to support cultural transmission, Australia risks losing irreplaceable cultural knowledge that contributes to national identity and regional relationships.

### **8.3. Reduced Youth Engagement and Increased Social Risk**

Pasifika communities have some of the youngest age profiles in Australia. Inaction risks:

- youth disengagement
- reduced school attendance
- limited creative and sporting pathways
- increased vulnerability to social isolation
- missed opportunities for leadership development

Investment now prevents long-term social and economic costs.

### **8.4. Missed Economic and Tourism Opportunities**

Without cultural centres, digital platforms and major cultural events:

- Australia forfeits significant cultural tourism revenue
- creative industry growth slows
- regional economies miss out on job creation
- Australia loses competitiveness to other Pacific destinations investing heavily in cultural tourism

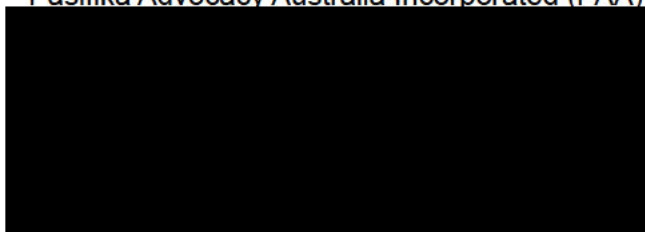
FestPAC 2028 and the Pacific tourism boom will proceed—with or without Australia.

### **8.5. Weakening of Australia's Pacific Relationships**

Cultural diplomacy is central to Australia's Pacific Step-Up. Inaction risks:



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- diminished regional influence
  - weakened people-to-people relationships
  - reduced soft-power impact
  - missed opportunities for cultural exchange and collaboration

Other nations are already positioning themselves as cultural leaders in the region.

### **8.6. Continued Under-Representation in National Cultural Frameworks**

Without structural reform, Pasifika artists, athletes and cultural practitioners will remain:

- under-represented in leadership
- under-funded in creative pathways
- under-resourced in cultural infrastructure
- under-recognised in national cultural narratives

This perpetuates inequity and limits Australia's cultural diversity.

### **8.7. Fragmented National Cultural Infrastructure**

Without a coordinated national approach:

- cultural access remains postcode-dependent
- regional communities continue to face barriers
- schools lack cultural spaces
- digital access remains uneven
- national cultural identity becomes fragmented

A national cultural infrastructure strategy is essential to prevent long-term disparities.

## **9. Case Studies: Proven Models of Cultural Infrastructure and Participation**

### **9.1 Case Study 1: Polynesian Cultural Centre (Hawai'i) — <https://www.polynesia.com>**

The Polynesian Cultural Centre (PCC) is one of the world's most successful cultural tourism institutions. It:



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- attracts over 700,000 visitors annually
  - employs hundreds of Pacific Islanders
  - generates significant tourism revenue
  - delivers daily cultural programming, large-scale productions and educational experiences

PCC demonstrates how culturally grounded infrastructure can drive economic growth, youth employment, cultural preservation and international tourism.

### **9.2 Case Study 2: FestPAC** — <https://www.festpackhawaii.org> The World's Largest Celebration of Indigenous Pacific Cultures

Established in 1972, FestPAC brings together thousands of artists, cultural practitioners and leaders from across the Pacific. Recent developments include:

- the Pacific Tourism Organisation and New Caledonia positioning FestPAC 2028 as a global cultural tourism showcase
- integration of digital storytelling, immersive experiences and regional tourism strategies

FestPAC shows how cultural events can strengthen diplomacy, tourism, creative industries and regional cooperation.

### **9.3 Case Study 3: Leulumoega Fou College (Samoa)** — School-Based Cultural Infrastructure

Leulumoega Fou College hosts a student art museum that:

- attracts tourists
- supports cultural education
- provides economic opportunities for young artists
- strengthens cultural identity and intergenerational learning

This model demonstrates the power of embedding cultural infrastructure within schools and universities.

### **9.4 Case Study 4: Western Australian Cultural Infrastructure Framework 2030+** — National Precedent

The WA Framework identifies cultural infrastructure as a driver of:

- urban renewal



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- innovation
  - cultural tourism
  - new market development
  - community participation

It provides a national precedent for a coordinated, strategic approach to cultural infrastructure planning.

### **9.5 Case Study 5: Moreton Bay Pasifika Cultural Ecosystem — A Growing Australian Cultural Hub**

The Moreton Bay Region in Queensland is one of Australia’s most significant Pasifika cultural centres, home to an estimated 20,000–25,000 Pasifika residents. This rapidly growing population has created a vibrant, community-driven cultural ecosystem that demonstrates both the strength of Pasifika cultural expression and the urgent need for dedicated cultural infrastructure.

#### **A Thriving Cultural Community**

Moreton Bay hosts one of the most active Pasifika cultural landscapes in Australia, with established groups and emerging collectives contributing to:

- dance
- music
- weaving
- carving
- tattooing
- theatre
- youth leadership
- sport

These groups operate across Caboolture, Deception Bay, Redcliffe, North Lakes and surrounding suburbs, forming a dense network of cultural activity that strengthens identity, belonging and intergenerational learning.

Key groups include:



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- Moreton Bay Pasifika Youth Dance Collective
  - Siva Samoa Moreton Bay
  - Tatau Dance Crew
  - Moreton Bay Pasifika Choir
  - Women's weaving circles in Deception Bay, Caboolture and Redcliffe
  - Tongan koka'anga groups producing ngatu
  - Local Pasifika carvers and visual artists
  - Pasifika youth theatre groups

These groups provide cultural education, community connection and youth engagement, often operating without dedicated facilities or stable funding.

### **Youth Engagement and Leadership**

Moreton Bay has one of the youngest Pasifika populations in Australia. Cultural groups in the region:

- provide safe spaces for young people
- strengthen identity and belonging
- support mental health and wellbeing
- offer pathways into arts, media, cultural leadership and sport
- reduce disengagement and social isolation

The region's youth-driven cultural activity demonstrates the need for structured pathways, training programs and dedicated cultural spaces.

### **Cultural Tourism and Regional Identity**

Moreton Bay's Pasifika cultural ecosystem contributes to:

- local festivals
- community events
- regional tourism
- cultural markets



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- school and university programs

Events such as Pasifika festivals, cultural showcases and sporting competitions attract visitors from across Queensland and interstate, highlighting the region's potential as a cultural tourism destination.

### **Gaps and Structural Barriers**

Despite its cultural strength, Moreton Bay lacks:

- dedicated Pasifika cultural infrastructure
- rehearsal and performance spaces
- digital storytelling labs
- youth cultural leadership centres
- long-term funding pathways
- representation in regional cultural planning

Most groups operate in borrowed halls, churches, school spaces or private homes, limiting their ability to grow, professionalise or host large-scale events.

### **Relevance to National Cultural Policy**

The Moreton Bay Pasifika ecosystem demonstrates:

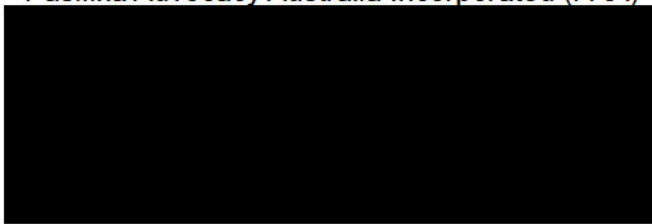
- the scale and vibrancy of Pasifika cultural life in Australia
- the need for purpose-built Pasifika Cultural Centres
- the importance of youth-focused cultural infrastructure
- the economic and social benefits of cultural tourism
- the urgency of addressing structural inequity

Moreton Bay provides a clear, evidence-based example of why national investment in Pasifika cultural infrastructure is essential. It shows that the demand already exists — what is missing is the infrastructure to support it.

### **A Model for Regional Cultural Development**

With appropriate investment, Moreton Bay could become:

- a national hub for Pasifika arts and culture

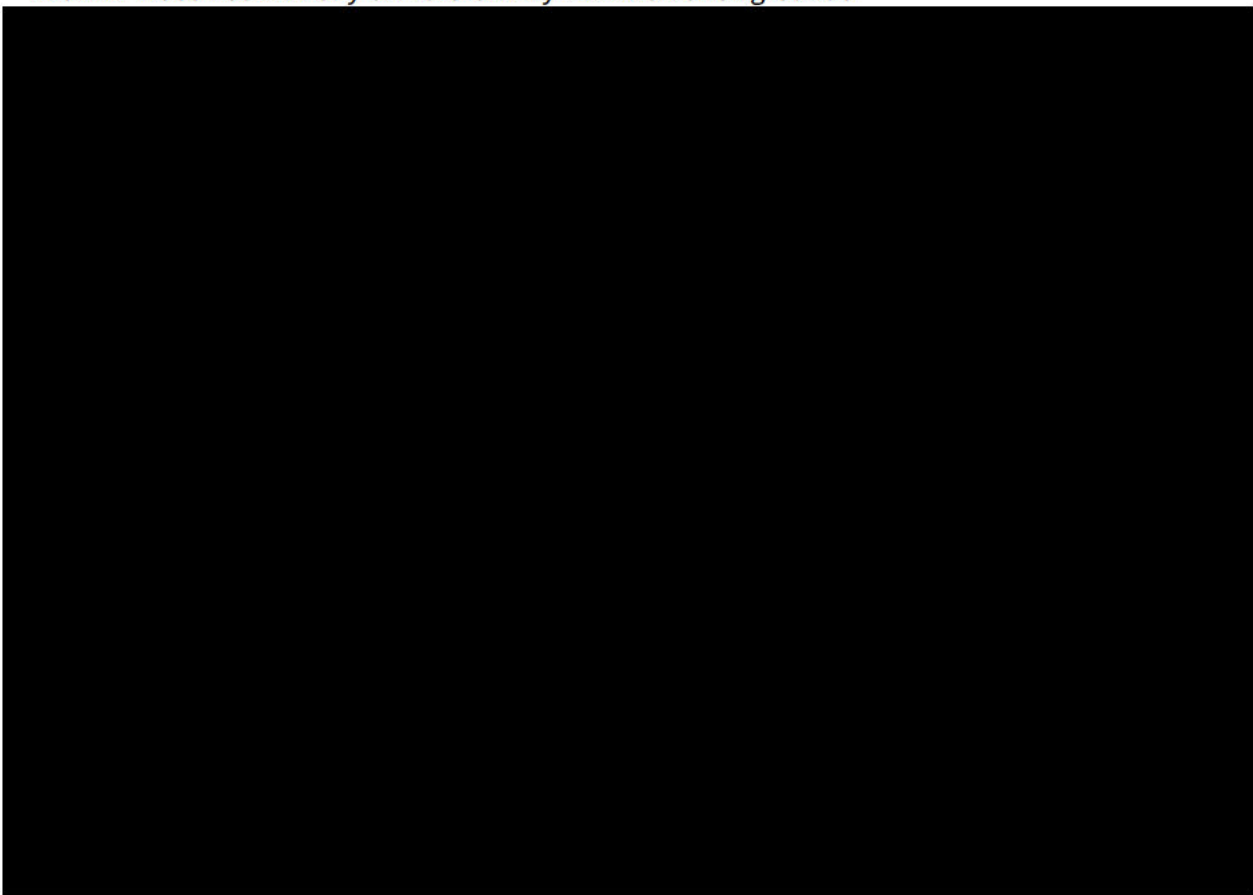


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- a centre for youth cultural leadership
  - a regional cultural tourism destination
  - a model for community-led cultural infrastructure
  - a key site for First Nations–Pasifika cultural exchange

The region’s existing cultural ecosystem provides a strong foundation for a Pasifika Cultural Centre that would deliver long-term cultural, economic and social benefits.

*Pasifika Vibes Festival City of Moreton Bay-Lawnton Showgrounds*



*These photographs showcase the richness of our culture, our food, our artwork entertainment...through festival.*



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Map 3: Pasifika Communities & Cultural Hubs in the City of Moreton Bay



*This map illustrates the major Pasifika population centres and cultural hubs across the Moreton Bay Region, highlighting community activity in Caboolture, Deception Bay, North Lakes, Kallangur and Redcliffe. It demonstrates the scale of Pasifika cultural participation and the need for dedicated infrastructure.*



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## **10. Implementation Pathway (12–24 Months)**

A staged implementation pathway ensures that cultural infrastructure, participation programs and regional partnerships can be delivered efficiently, collaboratively and with measurable outcomes.

### **10.1 Phase 1: Foundation and Co-Design (0–6 Months)**

- Establish First Nations and Pasifika advisory groups to guide design and governance.
- Commission feasibility studies for:
  - National Cultural Convention Centre
  - Pasifika Cultural Centres in QLD and NT
  - National network of school-based cultural infrastructure
- Begin co-design processes with communities, Elders, cultural practitioners and youth.
- Identify potential sites for cultural centres and convention infrastructure.
- Initiate national consultation on cultural protocol guidelines.

### **10.2 Phase 2: Pilot Programs and Early Investment (6–18 Months)**

- Launch pilot digital cultural access programs, including:
  - mobile cultural units
  - livestreamed performances
  - virtual exhibitions
- Begin youth cultural leadership and creative pathways programs.
- Establish interim cultural hubs in existing community facilities.
- Develop partnerships with schools, universities and local governments.
- Secure land, planning approvals and architectural design for major cultural centres.
- Begin Australia’s preparatory work for hosting FestPAC.

### **10.3 Phase 3: Construction, Expansion and National Rollout (18–24 Months)**

- Commence construction of:
  - National Cultural Convention Centre



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○ Pasifika Cultural Centres (QLD and NT)

- Expand digital cultural infrastructure nationally.
- Launch national cultural participation strategy with subsidised access for young people.
- Implement national cultural protocol guidelines across government events.
- Establish national touring circuits for First Nations and Pasifika arts.
- Finalise Australia's FestPAC hosting proposal and regional partnerships.

#### **10.4 Long-Term (Beyond 24 Months)**

- Full operation of cultural centres and convention infrastructure.
- Ongoing evaluation and expansion of digital cultural access.
- Strengthened cultural diplomacy and regional leadership.
- National cultural infrastructure network fully integrated into education, tourism and creative industries.

## **11. Pillars**

### **11.1 Pillar 1 – First Nations First**

PAA strongly supports the principle that **First Nations cultures must remain central in all cultural policy settings**. This principle must be embedded across all levels of government, national institutions, and public life, ensuring that First Nations cultural authority is visible, respected, and structurally upheld.

#### **National Leadership and Cultural Protocols**

To give practical effect to First Nations First, Australia must ensure that **First Nations cultural protocol is a standard, non-negotiable component of all official state events**. This includes visits by international dignitaries such as King Charles III, the Queen Consort, and foreign political leaders. Cultural protocol should always include a **formal Welcome to Country**, First Nations representation, and opportunities for First Nations artists and cultural leaders to participate in national ceremonies.

This approach aligns with international best practice. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori cultural performance and protocol (pōwhiri, haka, waiata) are embedded in state welcomes and diplomatic engagements. This strengthens national identity, cultural sovereignty, and international recognition. Australia can adopt a similar model by establishing:



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- **National guidelines for cultural protocol**, co-designed with First Nations communities
  - **Mandatory First Nations representation** at all state visits, national ceremonies, and major government events
  - **Inclusion of First Nations artists, Elders, and cultural practitioners** in official delegations and diplomatic programs

This would reinforce Australia's commitment to truth-telling, respect, and cultural leadership.

### **Cultural Sustainability Through Education and Youth Engagement**

Cultural sustainability begins with young people. Strengthening First Nations cultural identity requires investment in **school-based and university-based cultural infrastructure**, including:

- student art museums
- cultural exhibition spaces
- performance and storytelling venues
- language and cultural learning hubs
- digital media and creative-technology spaces

An example is **Leulumoega Fou College in Samoa**, where a student art museum attracts tourists, supports cultural education, and provides economic opportunities for young artists. Similar models in Australia would:

- embed First Nations culture in everyday learning environments
- support intergenerational knowledge transfer
- strengthen cultural pride and identity
- create pathways into creative industries, tourism, and cultural leadership
- increase visibility of First Nations arts within mainstream education

Research consistently shows that **culturally grounded education improves wellbeing, engagement, and academic outcomes** for Indigenous young people. Investing in cultural infrastructure within schools and universities is therefore both a cultural and educational imperative.

### **Long-Term Sustainability Through Genuine Partnership**



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Long-term cultural sustainability requires **authentic, community-led partnerships** between governments and cultural communities. This includes First Nations communities and Pasifika communities, whose cultural practices intersect and contribute to Australia's broader cultural landscape.

Effective partnerships must be based on:

- **co-design and shared decision-making**
- **long-term, stable funding agreements**, not short-term project grants
- **community-controlled governance models**
- **support for Elders, cultural knowledge holders, and cultural practitioners**
- **investment in community-led cultural programs, festivals, and creative enterprises**

This approach reflects the principles of the **National Agreement on Closing the Gap**, which emphasises community-controlled decision-making and culturally safe service delivery.

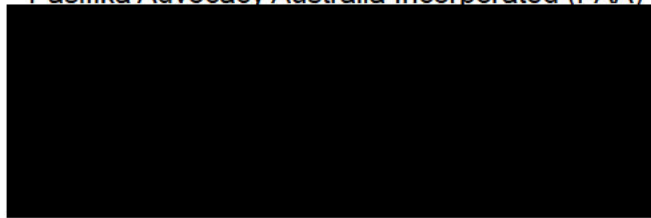
Recent cultural-policy research highlights that:

- First Nations cultural participation is a key driver of **social cohesion, wellbeing, and community resilience**.
- Cultural infrastructure is essential for **preserving language, ceremony, and cultural knowledge**.
- First Nations arts and cultural expression contribute significantly to the **national creative economy**, including tourism, festivals, visual arts, and performance.
- Visitors to Australia increasingly expect **authentic First Nations cultural experiences**, making cultural protocol and visibility essential to national branding.
- Cultural infrastructure is recognised as a foundation for **economic development, urban renewal, and innovation**, as outlined in the Western Australian Cultural Infrastructure Framework 2030+.

Embedding First Nations First across cultural infrastructure, education systems, and national events ensures that Australia's cultural future is grounded in respect, truth-telling, and cultural continuity.

### **Integrated Vision**

A First Nations First approach ensures that:



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- First Nations cultures are visible, valued, and central
  - Young people have access to cultural spaces that strengthen identity
  - Government partnerships are genuine, long-term, and community-led
  - Australia’s national identity reflects its deep cultural foundations
  - Cultural policy settings uphold cultural authority, truth-telling, and self-determination

This pillar provides the foundation upon which all other cultural policy settings must be built

## **11.2 Pillar 2 – A Place for Every Story**

Pillar: Strong Cultural Infrastructure – Ensuring Every Story Has a Place

Australia’s cultural landscape is diverse, yet many community voices remain structurally excluded—particularly young people, culturally diverse communities, and those experiencing disadvantage. To ensure that every story has a place, we recommend the development of major cultural centres in each state and territory to showcase Australia’s cultural diversity and attract tourism.

A successful model is the Polynesian Cultural Centre (PCC) in Hawai‘i, which operates daily cultural activities, evening performances, and large-scale storytelling productions, employing hundreds of people from across the Pacific. A similar approach in Australia would generate economic benefits, create employment pathways, and strengthen cultural visibility.

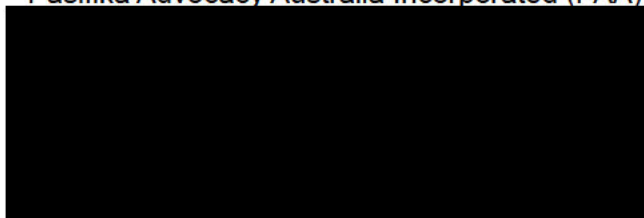
For example: • A National First Nations Cultural Centre could be established in New South Wales • A Pasifika Cultural Centre could be established in Queensland, home to one of the largest Pasifika populations in Australia

These centres would provide spaces for performance, storytelling, craft, food, language, and cultural education, while strengthening Australia’s tourism offering.

Australia’s cultural and creative sector is a major economic contributor, generating \$67.4 billion in 2023–24 and accounting for 2.5% of national GDP. The sector has grown 6.6% in a single year and 62% over the past 15 years, supporting over 282,000 workers and more than 95,700 creative businesses. Yet access to cultural spaces remains uneven, with culturally diverse communities, young people, and regional populations facing structural barriers to participation.

Major cultural centres are therefore not simply “venues”—they are critical national infrastructure that deliver economic, social, cultural and diplomatic benefits.

Why Cultural Centres Matter



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- Economic Growth & Tourism Cultural infrastructure drives visitation, supports hospitality and retail, and anchors local economies. The PCC model demonstrates how daily programming, cultural education, and large-scale productions can sustain hundreds of jobs and generate significant tourism revenue.
  - Creative-Industry Development Centres would provide rehearsal rooms, studios, digital labs, and performance venues—supporting artists, filmmakers, designers, musicians, and cultural practitioners. This aligns with Revive’s commitment to strengthening the creative economy and expanding career pathways.
  - Youth Engagement & Skills Development Young people—particularly from Pasifika and culturally diverse communities—would gain access to training in arts, media, cultural leadership, tourism, and event production. This supports workforce participation and reduces barriers to creative careers.
  - Cultural Diplomacy & Regional Partnerships A national network of cultural centres would strengthen Australia’s cultural ties with the Pacific and Asia, positioning Australia as a regional hub for cultural exchange and preparing the nation to host future events such as FestPAC.
  - Social Cohesion & National Identity Cultural centres provide spaces where communities can gather, celebrate identity, and share stories. This strengthens belonging, wellbeing, and intercultural understanding—key outcomes identified in national cultural-policy research.

#### Alignment with National Cultural-Infrastructure Research

The Western Australian Cultural Infrastructure Framework 2030+ identifies cultural infrastructure as a driver of cultural tourism, urban renewal, innovation, and new market development, and a foundation for a culturally engaged population. Applying these principles nationally strengthens the case for a network of major cultural centres.

#### Proposed National Cultural Centre Network

- National First Nations Cultural Centre – NSW A flagship institution honouring the world’s oldest continuous cultures.
- Pasifika Cultural Centre – Queensland Serving one of Australia’s largest Pasifika populations and strengthening Pacific engagement.
- Additional Centres Across All States and Territories Each reflecting local cultural strengths, migrant histories, and creative industries.



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### 11.3. Pillar 3 – Centrality of the Artist

Pasifika artists and athletes contribute significantly to Australia’s cultural landscape through dance, music, tattooing, weaving, carving, theatre, contemporary arts and sport. Their work strengthens cultural identity, builds community cohesion, and contributes to Australia’s creative economy. Yet Pasifika artists remain under-represented in national cultural frameworks, funding programs, and leadership roles. Ensuring the centrality of Pasifika artists requires visibility, investment, and culturally safe pathways that recognise the unique cultural labour they carry.

#### **Pasifika Artists in Queensland and the Northern Territory**

Queensland and the Northern Territory are home to some of Australia’s most active Pasifika cultural communities. Artists and groups contributing to the national cultural landscape include:

- **Dance:** PolyFono, Rako Pasefika
- **Music:** Emily Wurramara, Rosita Vai
- **Tattooing:** Tatau Brisbane, Tatau Darwin
- **Weaving:** Pacific women’s weaving circles
- **Carving:** Steven Rhys, NT Pasifika Carvers Collective
- **Theatre:** Polytoxic, Pasifika youth theatre groups

These artists and collectives contribute to festivals, community events, schools, galleries, and national stages. Their work preserves cultural knowledge, strengthens identity, and provides pathways for young people into creative industries.

#### **Moreton Bay Region – Artists and Cultural Practitioners**

The Moreton Bay Region is one of Australia’s largest Pasifika cultural centres, home to an estimated **20,000–25,000 Pasifika residents**. It is a major hub for Pasifika arts, culture, and sport. Local groups include:

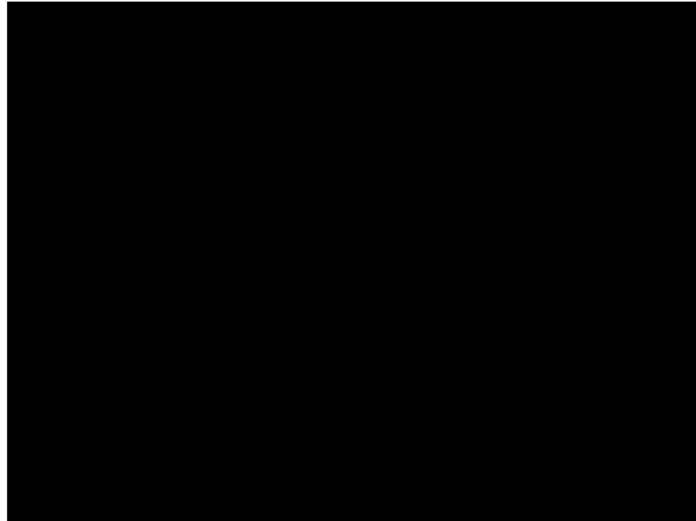
- Moreton Bay Pasifika Youth Dance Collective
- Siva Samoa Moreton Bay
- Tatau Dance Crew
- Moreton Bay Pasifika Choir



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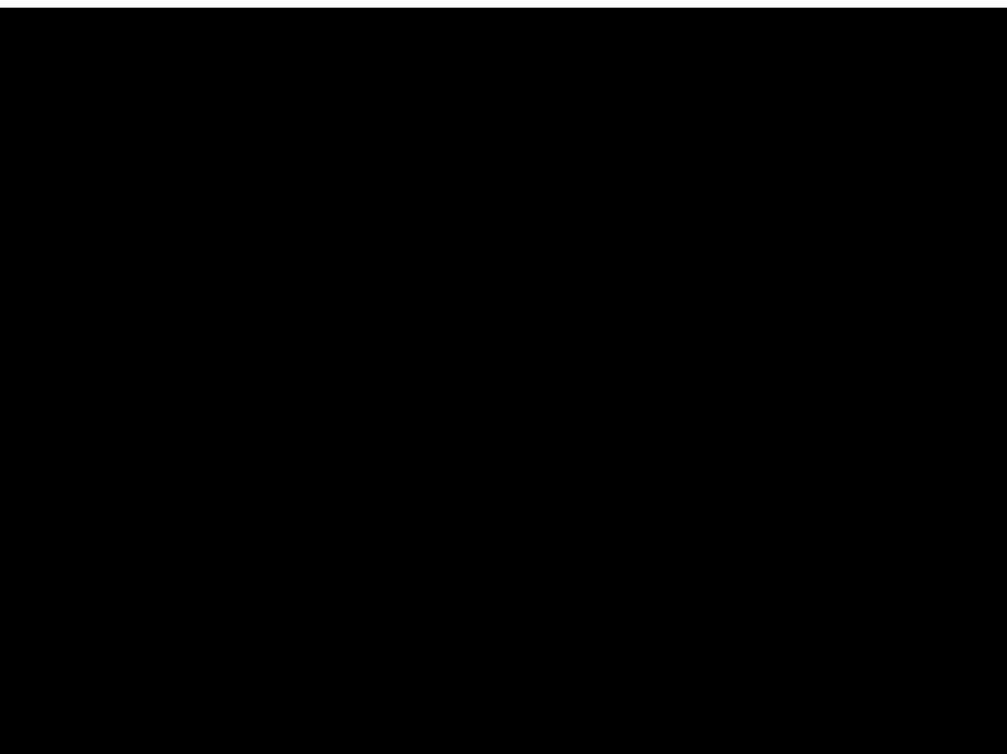
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- Women’s weaving circles in Deception Bay, Caboolture and Redcliffe
  - Tongan koka’anga groups producing ngatu
  - Local Pasifika carvers and visual artists
  - Pasifika youth theatre groups

These groups provide cultural education, intergenerational learning, and community connection. They also contribute to local tourism, festivals, and regional cultural identity.





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*These photographs demonstrate language, dancing, song, leadership and kava ceremony taken at Deception Bay Maota Fono.*

### **Pasifika Sporting Excellence**

Sport is a major cultural expression for Pasifika peoples and a key part of Australia's cultural identity. Pasifika athletes are highly visible cultural ambassadors who inspire young people and strengthen community pride.

Examples include:

- **Tino Fa'asuamaleaui** – Queensland Maroons captain
- **Payne Haas** – Brisbane Broncos
- **Simaima Taufa** – Australian Jillaroos
- **Redcliffe Outrigger Canoe Club**
- **Moreton Bay Va'a paddlers**



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Pasifika athletes contribute to Australia's sporting success, community cohesion, and international reputation. Their leadership and visibility demonstrate the importance of recognising sport as a cultural practice within national cultural policy.

### **Work and Culture**

Work and culture are deeply interconnected for Pasifika communities. Cultural identity shapes how Pasifika people lead, collaborate, communicate and contribute to workplaces, creative industries and community settings. Key cultural concepts include:

- **va** – relational space and respectful connection
- **talanoa** – open, inclusive dialogue
- **tautua** – service to community
- **mana** – dignity, authority, and integrity

These frameworks support:

- respectful and collaborative team environments
- strong interpersonal relationships
- intergenerational knowledge sharing
- community-centred leadership
- a commitment to service and collective wellbeing

However, Pasifika workers and artists face structural barriers including:

- under-representation in leadership and decision-making
- limited access to culturally safe creative pathways
- lack of recognition of cultural labour and community obligations
- limited cultural infrastructure and dedicated spaces
- inconsistent funding access due to systemic barriers

### **Strengthening the Centrality of Pasifika Artists**

Recent cultural-policy research highlights that:

- Culturally diverse artists are **significantly under-funded** compared to their contribution to the creative economy.



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- Pasifika artists often perform **unpaid cultural labour**, including community events, funerals, church obligations, and cultural ceremonies.
  - Lack of cultural infrastructure limits opportunities for professional development, rehearsal, exhibition, and performance.
  - Pasifika artists contribute to **tourism, festivals, youth engagement, mental health, and community wellbeing**, yet these contributions are rarely recognised in policy or funding frameworks.
  - Pasifika communities have some of the **highest youth populations** in Australia, making investment in creative pathways essential for long-term cultural sustainability.

Embedding Pasifika artists in national cultural policy strengthens Australia's creative economy, cultural diplomacy, and social cohesion.

#### **PAA's Role in Addressing Barriers**

PAA addresses these barriers by:

- providing culturally safe creative and professional development
- delivering leadership and governance training
- recognising cultural obligations within workforce planning
- supporting sustainable careers for artists, athletes and cultural practitioners
- developing Pasifika Cultural Centres that integrate work, culture and training
- creating pathways for young people into arts, media, cultural leadership and sport
- advocating for equitable funding and representation in national cultural frameworks

This aligns with **Revive's vision** of a cultural sector that is inclusive, diverse, respectful and reflective of all Australians.



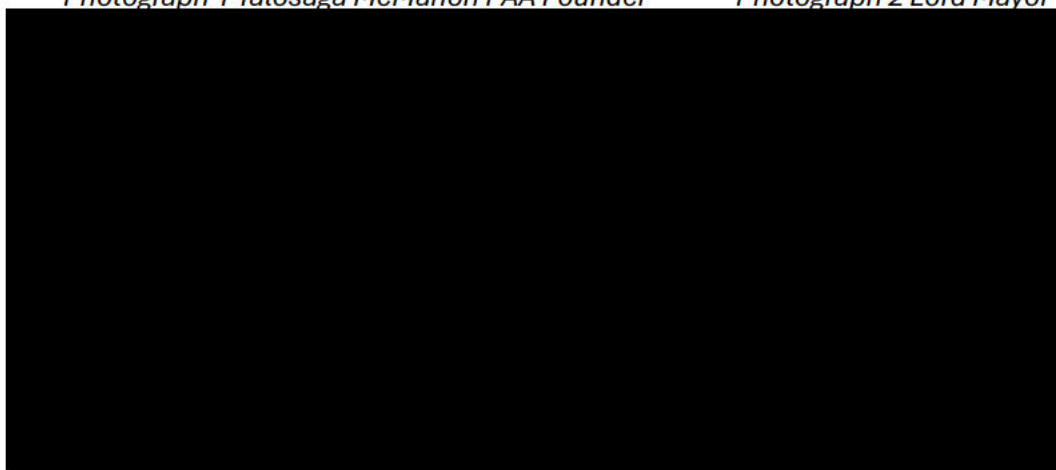
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*UN Flag Raising Human Rights and Domestic Violence Awareness at Redcliffe*

*Photograph 1 Talosaga McMahon PAA Founder*

*Photograph 2 Lord Mayor Flannery*



*Talosaga McMahon was a guest speaker – leader in the Pasifika community addressing barriers between Pasifika communities and all levels of government in Australia. Photograph 2 is the City of Moreton Bay Mayor Peter Flannery, Talosaga McMahon and UN President in Qld.*

### **Policy Recommendations to Strengthen This Pillar**

To ensure the centrality of Pasifika artists, we recommend:

- Establishing **Pasifika Cultural Centres** in Queensland and the Northern Territory
- Creating **dedicated Pasifika funding streams** within the Australia Council/Creative Australia
- Supporting **Pasifika youth arts programs** in schools and community settings
- Recognising **sport as cultural practice** within national cultural policy
- Funding **Pasifika-led festivals, exhibitions, and creative enterprises**
- Supporting **Pasifika language, heritage, and cultural education programs**
- Ensuring Pasifika representation in **national arts boards, advisory groups, and leadership roles**



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## 11.4 Pillar 4 – Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Australia already has strong partnerships with Pacific nations. Strengthening this pillar requires moving beyond symbolic engagement and investing in purpose-built cultural infrastructure that positions Australia as a regional leader in Pacific cultural diplomacy.

A key opportunity is the development of a major national cultural convention centre capable of hosting large-scale cultural events such as the Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture (FestPAC). FestPAC is the world’s largest celebration of Indigenous Pacific cultures, established in 1972 to prevent the erosion of traditional practices through cultural exchange. It brings together thousands of artists, cultural practitioners and leaders from across the Pacific.

Recent regional developments show the growing strategic importance of FestPAC. In 2026, the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) and the Government of New Caledonia signed a partnership to position FestPAC 2028 as a global cultural tourism showcase, integrating the festival into regional tourism marketing and expanding immersive cultural experiences . This demonstrates that FestPAC is no longer just a cultural gathering—it is now a major driver of tourism, regional collaboration, digital storytelling, and sustainable development.

Hosting FestPAC in Australia would:

- **Deliver significant economic benefits**, including tourism, hospitality, creative-industry jobs and regional development
- **Strengthen Australia’s Pacific relationships**, supporting foreign policy, cultural diplomacy and regional cooperation
- **Elevate Australia’s role as a cultural leader** in the Pacific, aligning with national priorities in diplomacy and soft power
- **Showcase First Nations and Pasifika cultures** on a global stage
- **Create long-term cultural infrastructure** that supports year-round exhibitions, festivals, conferences and educational programs

A purpose-built cultural convention centre would also support:

- national and international cultural festivals
- First Nations and Pasifika arts markets
- youth cultural summits
- digital storytelling and creative-technology programs



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- school and university cultural showcases
  - regional tourism strategies

This aligns with national research showing that cultural events and festivals generate **creative jobs, tourism benefits, and community participation**, as recognised in the Australian Government’s Festivals Australia program, which funds regional cultural events to strengthen local economies and audience engagement.

Australia is well-positioned to host FestPAC and lead the region in cultural infrastructure development. A national cultural convention centre would be a **legacy investment** that strengthens identity, diplomacy, and economic participation for decades.

### **11.5 Pillar 5 – Engaging the Audience (Expanded and Strengthened)**

The proposals outlined in Pillars 1, 2 and 4 would significantly increase cultural participation, audience engagement and national visibility of diverse cultural traditions. Honouring the arts, culture and heritage of all communities—while maintaining First Nations leadership—reflects wise governance and strengthens social cohesion.

However, **audience behaviour and expectations have changed dramatically**, driven by digital transformation, cost-of-living pressures, and shifting cultural habits. Research from Creative Australia shows that audiences now live in a **hybrid cultural world**, where digital and in-person experiences are intertwined, and where people expect to participate creatively, not just observe.

To reach audiences effectively, cultural participation must be **accessible, affordable and relevant**. National policy should support:

- **Subsidised access for young people and disadvantaged communities** Audience research shows that cost is one of the strongest barriers to participation, especially for young people and low-income households. Subsidies, free events, and community-based programming increase participation and strengthen cultural equity.
- **Digital and mobile cultural programs** Digital participation is essential for regional, remote and mobility-restricted audiences. Yet research shows that **digital access is uneven**, with persistent digital inequity affecting remote Indigenous communities and older Australians. National policy must invest in:
  - mobile cultural units
  - livestreamed performances
  - virtual exhibitions



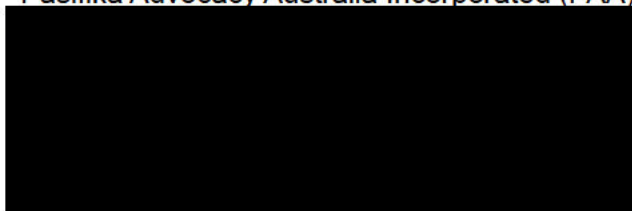
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- digital storytelling platforms
  - community Wi-Fi and digital-skills programs

These initiatives “unlock” cultural collections and ensure that distance is no longer a barrier to participation.

- **Innovation in presentation and distribution** Audiences increasingly expect interactive, immersive and participatory experiences. Creative Australia’s digital engagement research shows that people want to **insert themselves into the story**, engage with artists, and experience culture in real time across multiple platforms. This requires:
  - outdoor and pop-up cultural events
  - hybrid festivals
  - youth-led digital content
  - community co-creation models
- **Partnerships that connect cultural participation with education, housing and community services.** Cultural participation is strongly linked to wellbeing, belonging and community resilience. Integrating cultural programs into schools, community services, housing initiatives and community centres ensures that culture is not an “extra”—it is part of everyday life.
- **Cultural participation strengthens social cohesion**, especially in diverse communities.
- **Hybrid cultural engagement is now the norm**, and audiences expect low-cost, flexible access.
- **Digital access does not automatically equal participation** — without investment in skills, infrastructure and culturally relevant content, digital divides persist.
- **Audiences want meaningful connection**, not passive consumption. They expect dialogue, interaction and cultural relevance.
- **Young people are the fastest-growing cultural creators**, especially through digital platforms — but they need structured pathways and support.

By embedding accessibility, digital inclusion, innovation and cross-sector partnerships, Australia can build a cultural ecosystem where **every community sees itself reflected**, and where cultural participation becomes a driver of national unity, wellbeing and economic growth.



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## **Call to Partnership**

Pasifika Advocacy Australia (PAA) stands ready to partner with government to deliver a cultural future that is inclusive, ambitious and nationally significant. Pasifika communities bring deep cultural knowledge, strong regional relationships, and one of the youngest and fastest-growing populations in the country. We offer creativity, leadership, and a commitment to service that strengthens Australia’s cultural identity and its place in the Pacific.

This submission is not simply a request for investment—it is an invitation to co-design a national cultural landscape that reflects who we are as a nation and who we aspire to be. By working together, government and community can build cultural infrastructure that supports economic growth, strengthens diplomacy, empowers young people, and ensures that every story has a place.

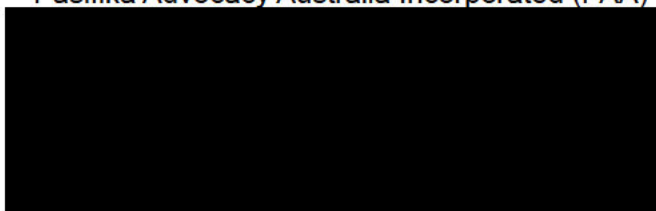
PAA is prepared to collaborate on planning, governance, community engagement, youth leadership, cultural programming and regional partnerships. We bring the networks, cultural expertise and community trust needed to deliver meaningful, long-term outcomes.

Australia has an opportunity to lead the region in cultural innovation, digital inclusion, and cultural diplomacy. Pasifika communities are ready to walk alongside government to realise this vision—strengthening identity, deepening regional ties, and building a cultural future that is vibrant, sustainable and uniquely Australian.

*Prime Minister Anthony Albanese bestowed a matai (chief) name Toesulusulu*



*Village of Satapuala in Aana 4 constituency in Samoa honoured Prime Minister Albanese demonstrating a strong relationship between Australia and Samoa in the Pasifika.*



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## Conclusion

Australia stands at a pivotal moment in shaping a cultural future that honours its First Nations peoples, reflects its true diversity, and prepares the nation for the cultural, economic and diplomatic opportunities of the coming decades. The evidence presented in this submission demonstrates that a forward-looking National Cultural Policy must not only acknowledge the cultural richness of Australia’s First Nations peoples and Pasifika communities—it must invest in the infrastructure, partnerships and pathways that allow these cultures to thrive.

The establishment of major cultural centres across states and territories, the development of school-based cultural infrastructure, and the creation of a national cultural convention centre capable of hosting FestPAC are not symbolic gestures. They are **nation-building investments** that will strengthen cultural identity, expand tourism, generate creative-industry jobs, and deepen Australia’s regional leadership in the Pacific.

The pillars outlined in this submission show that cultural policy is not an isolated domain. It is connected to education, youth development, economic participation, digital inclusion, social cohesion and international diplomacy. When cultural participation is accessible, when artists are central, when young people have pathways, and when First Nations leadership is upheld, the entire nation benefits.

Pasifika communities—one of the fastest-growing cultural populations in Australia—are ready to partner with government to deliver this vision. With strong cultural foundations, deep regional ties, and a rapidly expanding youth population, Pasifika communities bring creativity, leadership, and cultural strength that enrich Australia’s national identity.

A National Cultural Policy that embraces these opportunities will not only preserve culture—it will **activate it, grow it, and embed it** into the everyday life of the nation. It will ensure that every story has a place, and that every community can see itself reflected in Australia’s cultural future.

Pasifika Advocacy Australia stands ready to work alongside government to build a cultural landscape that is inclusive, vibrant and sustainable for generations to come.