

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

Greetings,

I want to acknowledge the opportunity to contribute to the redevelopment of the National Cultural Policy. I cannot express the importance of strategies such as this to help champion the arts and help cultivate our national identity.

I am Max Cattana. I am an actor, and I consider it my responsibility as an Australian artist to champion the work we do as Australians, not just in support of my fellow artists but in the way the arts shape our national identity and enrich the expression of the past, present, and future of this Australian life.

I work across film, TV, and theatre, both nationally and internationally, and through my experiences both at home and abroad, I have recognized areas in which we can improve the cultural development of the arts in our country — a country that I am so incredibly proud of, but one that I see as lacking the fundamental support needed to cultivate artists. Without this support, we face the complete disintegration of any cultural identity expressed through the arts, and we lose the pulse of what it means to be Australian. If we don't act now in the present, we will lose a sense of both our history and our future as a nation.

As an artist, I recognize that Australian artists struggle to make money from the work that they do. Primarily, I see this struggle as the greatest roadblock to the development of the artist and their work. Artists have to postpone making art and in many cases, stop making art altogether to find work that pays to support themselves and their families.

We lose the gifts and genius of so many artists every year to this underfunding of our artists and their institutions.

I would like to address the pillar of the Revive Policy that recognizes the centrality of the artist and propose that an investigation into a universal basic income would be a great initiative that would allow artists to develop their work and ultimately give more abundantly to our communities and audiences, helping to ignite an artistic identity and enhance it through the cultivation of the arts.

We drastically undervalue the arts through our limited financial support of artists. We go to the arts when all else fails, when we fail to find words and ways to console the softer parts of our being. We go to artists to help us see who we are, both individually and collectively. If we do not have a strong national identity as artists, then when hardship comes, we will not have anything to reflect the hearts and minds of those in struggle. We won't have a national vocabulary to explain what it means to live and flourish as a Nation.

That is what the arts offer to our nation and we need to start valuing it, or we risk losing our identity as a nation.

This is my declaration as an Australian artist, and I hope that this resonates with the policymakers, my fellow artists, and our Australian communities.

With Warmth,

Max Cattana

