

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My position within the regional arts landscape is shaped by the unique opportunities and persistent structural challenges that define creative practice outside metropolitan centres. As a regionally based arts worker, I operate within a cultural ecosystem that is rich in community connection, deep placebased knowledge, and strong collaborative networks, yet constrained by limited infrastructure, inconsistent funding pathways, and reduced access to professional development. My work is embedded in the social, cultural, and environmental fabric of my region (), where creative practice plays a vital role in community identity, wellbeing, and local economic resilience.

Regional arts environments foster a distinctive mode of practice. The scale of communities encourages crossdisciplinary collaboration, longterm relationship building, and direct engagement with audiences. This proximity to community means that artistic projects often respond to local histories, landscapes, and social issues, generating work that is both culturally specific and nationally relevant. However, the same intimacy that strengthens regional arts practice also exposes the fragility of its support structures. Many regional artists, including myself, navigate a patchwork of shortterm contracts, volunteer labour, and selffunded initiatives to sustain our work.

Access remains an issue. Distance from metro centres limits exposure to national networks, touring opportunities, and industrystandard facilities. Travel costs, accommodation, and time away from local employment create barriers to participation in national programs, festivals, and professional development. Digital connectivity has improved access in some areas, but inconsistent infrastructure continues to restrict the full potential of online collaboration, training, and presentation. These limitations directly affect career sustainability and the ability of regional artists to contribute to national cultural conversations on equal footing.

Despite these challenges, regional artists are central to Australia's cultural vitality. We contribute to cultural tourism, activate public spaces, and strengthen social cohesion. Our work often intersects with First Nations knowledge, environmental stewardship, and local heritage, offering perspectives that enrich national narratives. Yet the current funding landscape does not adequately recognise the additional costs and complexities of regional practice. Investment tends to prioritise metropolitan institutions, leaving regional artists and organisations to compete for limited resources that rarely account for geographic disadvantage. The reliance on State recognised Cultural Institutions based in metro areas to "service" this regions, continually diminishes the authentic regional voice.

To fully realise the ambitions of a renewed National Cultural Policy, regional artists require targeted, sustained support. This includes longterm funding models that recognise the realities of regional practice; improved access to infrastructure, including digital platforms; and equitable pathways for career development, touring, and national presentation. Strengthening regional arts is not only a matter of fairness but a strategic investment in Australia's cultural future. Regional communities are undergoing significant social and economic transitions, and the arts are uniquely positioned to support resilience, innovation, and community wellbeing.