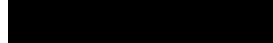


NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY SUBMISSION

Heidi Everett, Schizy Inc



www.schizy.org

1. About me

My name is Heidi Everett. I'm the founder and CEO of Schizy Inc, and multidisciplinary disabled artist/producer working across music, theatre, comedy and visual arts. I have complex mental health inclusive of homelessness. Creativity is my survival. Expressing it through the arts, encourages society to step up to make space for me and my community's existence.

Through my work, particularly Subtle Roar, I translate lived experience into story advocacy. Making, sharing and retaining our art is the culture of disability. It is how we communicate wisdom, curiosity and truth. My work is not about entertainment as primary goal. It's about challenging the status quo, inviting deeper thinking, and offering audiences a way to connect to something they're implicitly part of.

Through Schizy Inc, I support artists with complex disabilities. We operate an open door, often with very limited resources, a deep commitment to creating space where this work and attitude can exist and stay.

2. Challenges, opportunities and what matters in my practice and community

Disabled-led art making, equity and representation are central to everything I do. What matters most is creating space and resources for my disability group - artists with complex mental health disability, who are largely excluded from the current system.

Arts infrastructure in Australia is not built for us. Grants, timelines, venues and resources are structured in ways that actively work against the capacity of disabled people. Opportunities are rigid and time-specific, which does not align with the realities of living with complex mental health. There are layers of dis-access, especially for those with unseen disabilities.

There is also a lack of recognition that disabled people can lead. As a CEO, I am still often perceived as an advocate rather than someone "in charge of the show." We need disabled people in leadership, designing and implementing systems, not just participating in them.

The NDIS, in its current form, is pushing people into service models that don't support arts practice. There are almost no pathways for art making in psych wards and for people experiencing homelessness, outside of art therapy. This misses the point: disabled artists are not patients to be managed; we are cultural contributors.

At the same time, there is enormous opportunity. Disability cuts across all pillars of the National Cultural Policy: First Nations, artists, audiences, infrastructure. Universal access is not just a feature; it should be the feature.

There is also an untapped “disabled dollar.” Disabled audiences exist, but we generally only show up when we see ourselves reflected on stage and access is universal.

Representation matters—not just of identity, but of the culture of disability. When I saw Fred Leone perform on Country, I felt deeply connected. That is what builds audiences.

Disabled art is a unique genre. Our creativity is born from navigating and challenging barriers every day. We bring compassion, openness, curiosity and an aprismatic way of perceiving the world.

3. What I want to see in the next National Cultural Policy

I want to see a policy that recognises diverse Disability not as a sub-group, but as a culture and as living art.

We need Disability-designed infrastructure across the entire system: grants, funding models, timelines, application processes, venues and platforms. This must be led by diversely disabled people and built as multi-modal, opt-out access - not something extra or optional.

We need flexibility. A more fluid approach to how art is funded, made and presented, allowing works to develop in context with Disabled identity.

We need to take art out of abled venues and into cultural spaces - psych wards, the streets, retained by communities. Current platforms are gatekept by people who don't understand the culture of our experiences.

We need to actively dismantle ableism in the arts sector. Access should not be a category. Universal access creates a gentler, more compassionate society empowering everyone at the same time, in the same place.

Finally, recognise that for disabled people, access to art is not a luxury, it is a fundamental right of existence and language of authentic, unedited humanity.

Art in place.