

National Cultural Policy Submission

1472324

Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As an independent dance artist, choreographer and facilitator based in [REDACTED] my practice sits across street dance, community engagement and interdisciplinary performance. My work explores street dance as an embodied language — a way of communicating, building relationships and creating community. Through teaching, mentoring and performance projects, I see first-hand the impact that street dance has in creating belonging, cultural exchange and pathways for artistic development.

One of the biggest challenges I see within the cultural sector is that street dance and grassroots dance communities continue to be under-recognised within mainstream arts structures. Street dance exists through cyphers, jams, battles, mentorship and community-led spaces, yet many funding systems and institutional models do not reflect how this culture actually operates. As a result, artists and communities are often forced to fit into structures that were not designed for them.

I ask the Australian Government to explicitly recognise street dance, battles, cyphers and jams as legitimate contemporary cultural practice within the National Cultural Policy. Street dance should be recognised on its own terms, with an understanding of its unique cultural values, practices and pathways for development.

I also support dedicated funding pathways for street dance and grassroots cultural practice. Street dance has strong participation across Australia, particularly among young people, culturally diverse communities and LGBTQIA+ communities, yet funding, infrastructure and opportunities often do not reflect its reach or impact.

I also support stronger investment in community arts and cultural development. Grassroots communities create more than performances; they develop artists, mentors, producers, leaders and audiences. These spaces are often where people first experience creative expression, connection and belonging.

Access to safe and affordable spaces is also essential. Many street dancers rely on public and semi-public spaces to train, gather and build community, yet suitable spaces are increasingly difficult to access. Investment in accessible training and gathering spaces with safe flooring, lighting, shelter and transport access would significantly strengthen the sustainability of these communities.

If Australia is serious about supporting diverse cultural stories and practices, then street dance communities and the artists within them need to be recognised, supported and invested in.