

## Submission to Australia's Next National Cultural Policy

[REDACTED] perspective

The [REDACTED] welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of Australia's next National Cultural Policy.

We believe the five pillars established through Revive remain a strong framework, particularly in recognising First Nations leadership, inclusion, creative work, cultural infrastructure and audience engagement. The consultation paper also rightly highlights the importance of participation, belonging, resilience and shared experience within cultural life.

From a peace and community perspective, we see a significant opportunity for the next policy to build further on these ideas and more clearly recognise arts and culture as contributors to social cohesion, civic participation and community connection.

Across Australia, arts and cultural activity already plays an important role in bringing people together across generations, cultures and experiences. Community festivals, local creative projects, storytelling, music and participatory arts all create spaces where people connect, share experiences and build understanding. This is especially important during periods of social fragmentation, rising isolation and increasing economic pressure on communities and small organisations.

One challenge facing the sector is that much of this work is carried out by small, community-based and often volunteer-led organisations that are deeply embedded in local communities but can struggle with limited resources, short-term funding and increasing operational pressures. At the same time, changing digital behaviours and audience expectations are reshaping how people participate in culture, particularly younger generations.

We see several opportunities the next National Cultural Policy could strengthen:

- more explicit recognition of the role arts and culture play in community connection, social cohesion and dialogue across difference
- stronger support for local, place-based and community-led cultural activity
- broader recognition of cultural wellbeing, including belonging, intergenerational exchange, participation and community resilience
- improved support structures for small and volunteer-led organisations that contribute significantly to community cultural life
- evaluation measures that consider participation, belonging and community connection alongside economic outcomes

The consultation paper already recognises that participation in culture contributes to stronger communities, civic trust and resilience. We believe the next policy has an opportunity to build further on this by recognising arts and culture not only as creative or economic activity, but also as part of the social and civic infrastructure that helps communities remain connected, inclusive and resilient.

Arts and culture do not simply reflect who we are. They also help shape how we relate to one another and how communities navigate change, difference and shared experience.