

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Pillar 1: First Nations First

Funding and infrastructure to support First Nations artists: yes, please. Ask First Nations artists and peak bodies how they want to be supported. Then support them that way.

Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story

We are at a critical juncture. Artists, musicians, writers, filmmakers - freedom of creative expression in Australia must be protected. The National Cultural Policy must clearly oppose unreasonable and politically motivated interference in merit-based selection processes, and overreach in control or litigation of speakers, topics, publication, and statements of personal opinion or fact.

To be clear: hate speech is illegal. This is right, and important.

No one should be threatened or vilified. Dissolving the reasonable parameters of what constitutes hate speech in order to silence artistic expression from specific groups, artists from specific religious or ethnic backgrounds, or commentary about governments or military, is dangerous and makes all of us less safe.

As a liberal democracy with the expectation of freedom of expression, Australia must continue to do what we've done successfully for decades: interrogate challenging and complex viewpoints without bowing to the chilling effect of political silencing. To explore these ideas by creating art, not destroying it. To connect and collaborate as artists across cultural, religious and political borders, freely creating and engaging, not shying away from each other and ideas.

Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist

It's deeply concerning that the Policy doesn't explicitly name the existential harm generative AI is already causing Australian artists of all creative practices. \, [T]he protection of creative rights in the digital environment\, is not clear or decisive enough. AI must be named in the Policy. Our National Cultural Policy must actively address this harm, including:

- advocating for vigorous regulatory and legal defence against AI creative theft of visual artworks, music and writing
- punitive action against the corporations benefiting financially through the theft of Australian artists' creative work
- protections to regulate and compensate for contractual use of actors' and other artists' likenesses.

The use of AI in the review of submissions is painfully ironic.

Pillar 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Require companies that profit from the creative work or likenesses of Australian artists to contribute to an infrastructure and equity fund. This includes media corporations and any tech company operating in Australia that profits from LLM generative AI, or any AI model trained on Australians' creative work or likenesses.

Working artists need to be paid. They need super, WorkCover, sick leave. Introduce artist payments, and a function that allows artists to prove their work to Centrelink.

Government funding for arts and humanities degrees needs to be sufficient and repayment to be indexed fairly to working artists' incomes.

Creative Australia and related bodies like Writing Australia need to be properly funded, including state bodies like Writers Victoria.

Pillar 5: Engaging the Audience

Audiences must be engaged digitally, and in-person art needs to be financially and physically accessible.

Art, writing and music at Australian government schools need sufficient federal funding to states and national programs delivered at the state level. We need national KPIs for Australian kids' participation in the arts.

Thank you.