

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

Arts OutWest



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Arts OutWest, the regional arts development organisation for the Central West of NSW, welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the National Cultural Policy. For more than five decades, we have supported artists, councils, health and education partners, and communities across a large and culturally diverse region. Our experience aligns strongly with the five pillars of Revive, each of which underscores why regional voices must be central to national cultural policy and why sustained, equitable funding for regional arts is essential.

Regional Australia is home to strong, continuous First Nations cultural leadership. Arts Centres are not the only model for this work. In Regional NSW the RADOs work with ARAA to support and nurture First Nations work.

Regional stories are deeply connected to place and community. They broaden the national narrative beyond metropolitan perspectives and reflect the lived experiences of rural, remote, and regional Australians. Ensuring regional artists can create, present, and tour their work is essential to a culturally representative nation.

Regional artists face structural barriers—distance, limited infrastructure, higher costs, and fewer professional pathways. This has been made more difficult by the loss of TAFE and University training in the Arts. Addressing these inequities requires long term, place based funding models that recognise the real cost of working regionally. When regional artists are properly supported, the entire cultural ecosystem benefits.

Regional communities rely on multipurpose cultural hubs that serve as creative spaces, training centres, community connectors, and economic drivers. Investment in regional infrastructure and programs to support the infrastructure—venues, studios, digital capacity, touring networks—is essential to delivering cultural access and participation across the country. Local government has traditionally been the largest provider of these hubs and services in Regional NSW. With increased costs and economic difficulties, Local government will need increases in support to continue to offer and build these services.

Regional audiences are enthusiastic, loyal, and diverse. They deserve equitable access to high quality arts experiences. Proper funding enables touring, local presentation, community engagement, and programs that build lifelong cultural participation.

A strong National Cultural Policy must recognise that regional arts are not peripheral—they are central to Australia's cultural future. By aligning investment with the five pillars of Revive, Australia can ensure that regional voices are heard, regional artists are supported, and regional communities are fully included in the nation's cultural life.