

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am an artist-educator and board member of a number of Victorian non-profit arts orgs. I am concerned by the prevalence of censorship, political interference and racism in the arts. This submission is grounded in core values of and commitment to decolonisation, anti-racism, anti-discrimination; artists as the moral compass of the sector; freedom of artistic expression without limitations; and freedom from political interference in the arts.

Decolonisation, anti-racism and anti-discrimination (Pillars 1: First Nations First, 3: Centrality of the Artist & 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure)

The NCP must respect and take leadership from those in the sector who are already working from a strong decolonial, anti-racist and anti-discrimination framework.

The IHRA definition of antisemitism must be removed from all arts, cultural and educational institutions and be replaced with the UN Core Stance of Values: "The UN asserts that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, without distinction of any kind, including race or ethnic origin. It maintains that no state, institution, group, or individual should make any discrimination in human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Artists are the moral compass of the sector (Pillar 3)

The NCP must support artists to continue to be ethical and values-driven leaders of the sector and broader community.

Artists must be able to speak freely, sign letters and participate in boycott actions without harming their reputation and livelihoods.

Arts and cultural institutions must respect cultural diversity, and support, champion and care for the diverse conversations that artists bring to their programs, particularly those who have been targeted in the media for speaking out against injustices. Artists must not be instrumentalised by institutions, lobbyists, the media and politicians.

Freedom of speech and artistic expression (Pillars 3 & 4)

Strong cultural infrastructure must be based on artistic freedom of speech. This is already enshrined in the Creative Australia Act (11.e "to uphold and promote freedom of expression in the arts") and needs to be upheld in the NCP.

In order to create strong cultural infrastructure, art must be able to facilitate critical discourse, address political issues and critique power. For strong cultural infrastructure, there must be an end to the culture of intimidation that prevents artists from expressing and creating art freely.

The NCP must address the prevalence of censorship, targeting and cancellation of artists who speak out against injustices, particularly in relation to nations that have been condemned by the UN for acts of apartheid, genocide and war crimes.

Freedom from political interference in the arts (Pillars 3 & 4)

In order to create strong cultural infrastructure, the arts must remain independent and free from political interference. The NCP must ensure independent, 'arms length' funding processes across federal, state and local govt. This includes ensuring that politicians at all levels must not influence the provision or removal of funding support of a particular project or artist. This is already enshrined in the Creative Australia Act (article 14.2) and must be upheld in the NCP. A key action for the NCP must be to implement an inquiry into political interference in the arts, including through donations and board membership and lobbying.

