

WHAT I WANT:

I wish to ask the Federal Government to develop a new structural framework to support, develop and promote arts and crafts in Australia in a practical, sustainable and stimulating way. With the growth of AI, it has never been more important than now to support original human creativity. Please don't leave it to the accountants to see the bigger picture here. Strong boundaries are essential to ensure that AI does not take over from human creativeness.

ME:

As an older creative Australian, I have witnessed many changes to the artistic landscape in Australia. My forty plus years working as an editor in the film and TV industry are an example. Changes of government policy have had huge impacts on whether the cultural sector thrives or declines. I have lived through such cycles, but I now fear that AI represents a threat that is so different and potentially destructive that it could cause the extinction of human creativity as we know it.

I am now retired but continue to engage in artistic self-development at my local arts hub, the Willoughby Arts Centre. It is a small independent not-for-profit facility established over 60 years ago, which continues to exist through provision of classes for artists in many mediums, and the dedication of volunteers. Demand for places is strong, because there are limited opportunities in Sydney for skilled education for painters, sculptors, etc. It is an example of the few learning spaces available in Sydney, let alone in rural Australia.

CULTURAL VALUE:

Australians are quick to adopt their successful cultural icons like Cate Blanchett, Nicole Kidman, Mel Gibson, etc. During my working life some of the film directors who emerged were Peter Wier, Gillian Armstrong, Bruce Beresford, Philip Noyce, Fred Schepisi and more. Theirs was not an easy passage to fame. It was a small industry, and many of the early films of the Second Wave of Australian Film were made with minimum funds and much unpaid labour. The Australian Film and Television (and Radio) School in 1973 was an inspirational gamechanger, and a perfect example of government support for the arts that lead to international success for Australia. The financial value for Australia of the iconic film making examples named above is difficult to monetise, but it would be substantial.

FINANCIAL VALUE OF THE ARTS:

The benefits of the cultural sector are not always easily quantified, although places like the AGNSW can show statistics about the popularity of their gallery. Supporting the Arts will promote Australia to the world.

ARTS, CRAFT & DESIGN

The recent closure of the Design Centre in Paddington, Sydney was inexcusable. It is exactly why a National Cultural Policy needs to exist to support artists to survive and thrive through exhibiting and selling.

This submission is not clever, but I feel very strongly that artists are undervalued, under paid, and need a political framework that supports them to showcase Australia through art.