

Dragon Dreaming Festival is a community-led music, arts, and cultural gathering and takes place annually on Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri Country in NSW. Dragon Dreaming operates on a not-for-profit model grounded in principles of sustainability, inclusivity, and First Nations cultural respect.

Unlike conventional festivals, Dragon Dreaming festival is not just a curated program delivered to an audience solely for passive consumption; every attendee is both an active participant and contributor in the event. This model sustains a dynamic, vibrant, living community of artists and creatives, mentoring emerging talent and generating new opportunities for established creatives. Throughout the year, we identify new artists in all fields (music, visual arts, performance, media, & handmade crafts) through the Hatchling Competition, and to the winners we provide mentoring, and an avenue towards a festival appearance. Our community makes active and ongoing contributions to Australia's cultural landscape and carries its work onto international stages, including Boom Festival (Portugal), Ozora Festival (Hungary) and Fusion Festival (Germany).

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this consultation and submit the following principal recommendations and additional measures for consideration and adoption.

Update the policy framework to reflect the evolving cultural landscape, where traditional institutions are one voice among many in defining and delivering cultural value.

As discovery and engagement migrate online, cultural participation is increasingly decoupled from traditional institutions. Artists and consumers now gather primarily in informal, online social communities to create, promote and experience culture. These communities function, in practice, as a new form of social and cultural infrastructure. A future-facing policy must recognise this shift and expand its conception of cultural infrastructure accordingly.

Pillar 2 A Place for Every Story and Pillar 4 Strong Cultural Infrastructure:

1. Establish a formal federal recognition category of 'temporary cultural community' for communities whose primary site of cultural activity is a recurring participatory gathering with demonstrated ongoing community development.
2. Work with state and local governments to ensure that the federal recognition category unlocks pathways to planning support, venue security, and local infrastructure investment for recognised temporary cultural communities.
3. Create a multi-year operational funding stream, administered through Creative Australia, available to recognised temporary cultural communities to support year-round community development, skills transfer, and further enhance cultural infrastructure.
4. Facilitate small scale, temporary and experimental art installations through micro-grants and other low-bureaucracy funding schemes.

Improve resilience and support diversity in the live music scene by increasing targeted support for independent and small-scale events navigating acute economic and regulatory pressure.

While the current cultural policy has delivered meaningful relief for the industry, small and medium-scale events continue to face prohibitive economic pressures. Escalating user-pays policing costs, rising fuel and transport expenses, and volatility in the insurance market are

compounding financial stress across the sector. These pressures fall disproportionately on smaller events, which lack the resources to absorb compliance duplication imposed by regulatory inefficiencies, and have little capacity to seek the clarification and support needed to navigate them.

Pillar 4 Strong Cultural Infrastructure:

1. Establish a government-backed insurance pool or cooperative for small and medium-scale live events to remove structural barriers impacting the viability of small-scale cultural events.