

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

Murray Arts



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Murray Arts welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of Australia's new National Cultural Policy. As the Regional Arts Development Organisation for the cross-border Murray NSW and North East Victoria Region, Murray Arts works with creatives, communities, local government and business to strengthen cultural participation, support creative careers and build resilient communities across Regional and Rural Australia.

The cultural sector in Regional Australia faces both significant challenges and transformative opportunities. Longstanding inequity in access to funding, infrastructure, training and cultural services continues to impact artists and communities outside metropolitan centres. Many Regional and Rural artists operate in isolation, with limited access to sustainable employment pathways, professional development and touring networks. These challenges have been intensified by recent bushfires, floods and the ongoing impacts of Climate Change, which continue to affect community wellbeing, economic stability and cultural continuity across our region.

At the same time, Regional communities are highly innovative, connected and resourceful. The arts play a critical role in strengthening social cohesion, supporting mental health, attracting tourism and driving economic development. This Policy presents an important opportunity to recognise creativity as essential infrastructure for thriving communities, not an optional extra. Investment in Regional and Remote cultural development delivers substantial social, health and economic returns and should be embedded as a long-term national priority.

Murray Arts believes the new policy must place equity at its centre. This includes equitable funding models that recognise the higher costs and unique conditions of delivering arts and cultural activity across Regional and Rural communities. Multi-year operational funding for Regional arts organisations is essential to ensure sector stability, workforce retention and sustainable program delivery. Flexible funding structures that support collaboration, local decision-making and place-based approaches are critical for Regional success.

The policy must also recognise the importance of Disaster Preparedness within the arts and cultural sector. Creative organisations are increasingly responding to community recovery following natural disasters, yet many regional communities remain under-resourced and vulnerable themselves. Creative practice has a vital role in helping regional communities process trauma, maintain connection and imagine positive futures.

Support for First Nations Creative Development must also be a central pillar of the policy. They are leading important cultural, social and economic outcomes across regional Australia. On the Border, we have a wealth of cultural practice that is still being discovered and recognised nationally. The policy should prioritise long-term investment in First Nations-led creative initiatives, cultural leadership pathways and truth-telling projects, while ensuring Aboriginal communities retain ownership.

Finally, Murray Arts supports a policy framework that values creativity across all parts of Australia and recognises the essential contribution of Regional, Rural and Remote communities to the nation's cultural life. We strongly advise that any policy be linked with realistic funding commitments as the outcomes of any policy are only as good as the financial and political support behind it.