

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Australia's creative voice is its moral compass. It orients us — collectively, instinctively — toward what we value, what we grieve, what we imagine for ourselves and those who come after. For over twenty years, I have run a multi-disciplinary studio from central Australia, working with clients both remote and metropolitan. That practice, sustained across distance and discipline, has been possible because of a cultural framework that has remained — at its best — free from censorship, political interference, and institutional racism. That freedom is not incidental to good creative work. It is the condition of it.

We are a nation of makers. Of innovators and dreamers. This is not sentiment — it is a structural truth about how culture operates. Artists, designers, and writers are the people who hold the mirror at an angle, who articulate not just what is, but what could be. Consciously and unconsciously, creative practitioners collectively read and respond to the zeitgeist: the immediate and the abstract, the personal and the civic, the wound and the aspiration. This is a skill and intention unique to creative culture, and it is one that no algorithm, no policy brief, and no market incentive can replicate or replace.

What is at stake in any national cultural policy is not merely the funding or administration of the arts. It is the integrity of the imaginative commons — the shared space in which a country thinks, argues, mourns, and invents itself. When that space contracts under political pressure, or becomes legible only to institutional gatekeepers, we do not lose art. We lose capacity: the collective ability to see ourselves clearly and imagine something better.

Freedom of artistic expression without limitation — and freedom from political interference in the making and distribution of that expression — is not a luxury afforded to a healthy democracy. It is a precondition of one. A culture in which artists self-censor, in which funding is contingent on ideological alignment, or in which remote and independent practitioners are systematically underserved, is a culture that has diminished its own compass.

The future Australia makes will be shaped, in part, by who gets to be a maker. By whether the creative infrastructure of this country reaches beyond capital cities and institutional centres. By whether cultural policy treats independence not as a gap in the system, but as one of its greatest assets. Together we imagine and make the world we want — but only if the conditions for that imagining remain genuinely open, genuinely plural, and genuinely free.