

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As a Darwin-based theatre maker and community artist, I support the submission from the National Alliance of Community Arts and Cultural Development (CACD) organisations and practitioners. I strongly endorse the call for Australia's next National Cultural Policy to formally recognise and invest in CACD as essential cultural infrastructure, particularly in regional, rural and remote communities where arts practice is deeply connected to community wellbeing, identity and resilience.

Working in the NT, I see firsthand how community-led arts practice creates connection, participation and belonging across diverse communities. In many regional areas, CACD is not supplementary to cultural life, it is the foundation of it. It provides opportunities for people to tell their own stories, engage creatively with one another, and build stronger, more connected communities.

Despite its national reach and impact, CACD is not explicitly recognised within the current REVIVE framework. This creates a significant policy gap. It limits visibility of a cross-sector practice that directly advances national priorities around equity, access and participation, while reducing the capacity of governments to mobilise creative practice in response to increasingly complex challenges including climate impacts, disasters, social fragmentation and inequality.

For many Australians, particularly those in regional and remote communities, CACD is the primary way people meaningfully engage with arts and culture. Without recognising CACD, REVIVE risks overlooking the mechanisms through which cultural participation actually occurs outside major metropolitan institutions.

CACD is not a niche artform. It is a methodology embedded across sectors including health, education, justice, regional development, disaster recovery and climate adaptation. Although only 5–6% of national arts investment is explicitly attributed to CACD, this significantly underrepresents its true reach and impact because the work is dispersed across multiple funding streams and not consistently measured. This ongoing undercounting contributes to the undervaluation of a practice that delivers strongly against national policy goals.

CACD strengthens social cohesion and belonging, improves wellbeing, supports local economies and workforce pathways, enhances civic participation, and builds environmental awareness and climate resilience. In regional communities especially, it creates the relational infrastructure that enables communities to respond collectively to challenges and shape their own cultural futures.

Importantly, CACD directly advances all five pillars of REVIVE. It supports First Nations self-determination, amplifies diverse voices and stories, recognises community-based artists and cultural workers as essential contributors, and shifts cultural engagement from passive consumption to active participation.

I support the submission's recommendations for formal recognition of CACD within the policy; the establishment of a national CACD entity within Creative Australia; increased investment in workforce development; long-term, place-based funding models; improved national data collection; and stronger integration of CACD across portfolios including health, climate, disaster management and regional development.

To realise the vision of REVIVE, CACD must be properly recognised, measured and resourced as a cornerstone of Australia's cultural future, particularly for regional Australia.