

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

For the last 15 years I have worked in Australia's arts and cultural sector across administrative, producing, curating, and directorial roles. I am currently the Artistic Director of Performance Space in Sydney. My career has spanned galleries - both larger institutions and artist-run spaces, theatres and performance institutions, and festivals, across all scales. My passion throughout this has been for experimental, interdisciplinary, and boundary-pushing work.

I commend the Federal Government for its commitment to two consecutive arts policies, and welcome this exciting chance to build on the successes of Revive. Revive made important commitments to the centrality of artists, to safe workplaces for our sector, and to ensuring a place for every story. I believe that the experimental and independent sectors are absolutely critical in both delivering on the full promises of Revive, and to ensuring our next cultural policy serves the entire sector. These sectors must be strongly represented as essential to our sector's health and vibrancy.

Experimental practice is the fertile ground from which everything else emerges. Without spaces for artists to take risks, without small and grassroots organisations to support them before anyone else does, our sector would not be able to thrive and produce the truly transcendent work of generations. I am incredibly privileged in my role to get to witness this sort of exceptional striving for the new every day. However we operate with limited recognition and resourcing compared to other art forms.

With my peers, I advocate for the next cultural policy to include several key points I believe will ensure the resilience, adaptiveness, and diversity of our sector into the future:

- Acknowledgement of experimental practice as a critical breeding ground for culture, and a unique form with its own art historical lineage, distinct from emerging practices, digital or "immersive art", and dedicated support and recognition in policy that reflects this. Experts in this field of practice should be consulted to develop an adequate definition of experimental practice that protects this unique and distinct status.

- The National Cultural Policy must ensure independent and 'arms length' funding processes across federal, state and local governments. This includes ensuring that politicians at all levels must not influence or give advice that results in the provision or removal of funding support of a particular project or artist. This is already enshrined in the Creative Australia Act (article 14.2) and needs to be upheld in the National Cultural Policy.

- Strong cultural infrastructure must be based on artistic freedom of speech. This is already enshrined in the Creative Australia Act (11.e "to uphold and promote freedom of expression in the arts") and needs to be upheld in the National Cultural Policy.

- An ongoing commitment to a national commissioning and touring fund for small organisations, such as the Experimental Commissioning Consortium.

- A recognition of international engagement as critical to the careers of Australian artists, our reputation overseas and the long-term viability of the arts, and the inclusion of international cultural engagement a strategic priority in the next Cultural Policy.

- A commitment to minimise the use of AI in assessment, development of policy, and consultation with creative sectors. AI is bad for the environment, for artists, and for our cognitive function.

Thank you.