

Submission to the National Cultural Policy

Submitted by: Mandi McIntyre

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Dear Minister Burke,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the National Cultural Policy consultation.

As an arts and cultural professional working across community engagement, cultural development and creative participation, I support the submissions and advocacy work of [Creative Climate](#), [Green Music Australia](#) and the [Revive Community Arts campaign](#). I also acknowledge the important research and advocacy of [Kate Larsen](#), [Kate Ben-Tovim](#), [Justin O'Connor](#), [Bec Mac](#) and [A New Approach](#).

I welcome the strong foundation established through Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place and support continued investment in arts and culture as essential civic, social and community infrastructure.

First Nations First

First Nations leadership, cultural authority and knowledge systems must remain central to Australia's cultural future. First Nations cultural practice provides leadership in sustainability, care for Country, intergenerational knowledge-sharing and community connection — perspectives increasingly critical in responding to climate change, social fragmentation and community wellbeing.

Long-term cultural policy must continue to support self-determined First Nations cultural leadership, investment in community-led initiatives and protection of cultural knowledge systems.

A Place for Every Story

Australia's cultural diversity is one of our greatest strengths.

Kate Ben-Tovim's Churchill Fellowship research highlights the role of arts and culture as a form of national soft power that strengthens intercultural understanding, international relationships, civic participation and social cohesion. Her work reinforces that arts and culture should be understood not only as economic contributors, but as strategic social and

diplomatic infrastructure.

Research and advocacy by Kate Larsen also reinforces that cultural participation and freedom of artistic expression are fundamental human rights. Equity in arts access requires the removal of barriers across communities, locations, artforms and levels of participation. Cultural policy must support pluralism, accessibility and freedom of expression while resisting censorship, exclusion and political interference in the arts.

Australia has a significant opportunity in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 to position itself not only as a sporting nation, but as a culturally confident, globally connected and socially cohesive nation.

Centrality of the Artist

Artists and cultural workers are essential contributors to healthy, connected communities.

My 2025 Master's research through Deakin University reinforced that development (the creation of 'good change') occurs when people encounter high quality artistic experiences which translate to meaningful cultural experiences. The artist and their processes are central to this occurring.

Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Cultural infrastructure extends beyond buildings and venues.

Research by Justin O'Connor further highlights that arts and culture are core components of civic infrastructure and should be understood and resourced alongside education, health, youth, disability, ageing, housing and regional development because they are fundamental to a "decent, equitable and sustainable life in common."

Research by A New Approach strongly supports this position, particularly its recommendation for a long-term National Arts and Culture Strategy aligned with the structure and ambition of Australia's National Sport Strategy. ANA's research demonstrates that arts and culture contribute directly to social cohesion, productivity, resilience, creativity, wellbeing and international engagement.

This should include stronger long-term investment in arts education and cultural participation from the early years onward, similar to the sustained national investment approach applied to sport and community participation.

It includes the networks, festivals, grassroots organisations, libraries, local creative spaces and community-led initiatives that enable participation, connection and resilience across Australia's cities, suburbs and regions.

I support stronger investment in climate-responsive cultural policy, sustainable creative industries and Community Arts and Cultural Development practice, particularly in regional and diverse communities.

Research from A New Approach also reinforces that cultural infrastructure should be recognised as essential public infrastructure with impacts across education, tourism, health, regional development, climate resilience and social cohesion.

Engaging the Audience

Climate change is not only an environmental or economic issue, but a cultural one. Addressing it requires shifts in values, behaviours, and collective action. Artists and cultural workers are uniquely positioned to shape public attitudes, while festivals, venues, and cultural organisations provide trusted, scalable platforms to model and embed sustainable practices at a community level.

I support Green Music Australia's call for a significant opportunity to embed sustainability and climate leadership within Australia's cultural future, positioning the arts as a powerful driver of public engagement, community resilience and societal change.

Access, inclusion and safety must remain central to Australia's cultural future. I support Bec Mac's work regarding safer and more accessible night-time economies for women and diverse communities via embedding culture, music and arts in public spaces.

A thriving cultural sector depends on people feeling safe, welcomed and represented within cultural spaces and public life.

Recommendations

- Continued implementation and expansion of the Revive framework;
- Development of a long-term National Arts and Culture Strategy aligned with the ambition and coordination of the National Sport Strategy;
- Stronger investment in arts education and cultural participation from the early years onward;
- Recognition of arts and culture as civic, social and soft power infrastructure;
- Recognition that cultural infrastructure is also climate, community and democratic infrastructure;
- Increased investment in Community Arts and Cultural Development practice;
- Stronger support for climate-responsive cultural policy and sustainable creative industries;
- Greater investment in intercultural connection, cultural diplomacy and regional cultural participation; and
- Support for safe, inclusive and accessible cultural and night-time economies.

Australia has an opportunity to become a global cultural leader through sustained

investment in connected, creative and culturally engaged communities.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Sincerely,

Mandi McIntyre
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