

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am writing this as an individual artist.

The five pillars resonate strongly within my arts practice, and I will give a short overview of my career to help inform the relevance of my thoughts towards the next National Cultural Policy.

I co-founded Stalker Theatre in Sydney NSW in 1988.

Our physical theatre performances quickly established themselves in the national festival market and by 1990 we were touring yearly to Europe.

Over the years we have employed over one hundred artists and arts workers performing to hundreds of thousands of audience members both in Australia and globally.

In the 2000's I worked closely with Stephen Page and Rhoda Roberts, being one of the few non-indigenous performers to work extensively on both the Awakening section of the Sydney Olympic Opening Ceremony and on several presentations of the Festival of the Dreaming.

I was part of the 2000 millennial Broadcast from Uluru.

My works have toured over ten times to Latin America, twenty times to Europe, and I have engaged in major cross-cultural theatre collaborations in South Korea and Colombia.

I received the NSW Art and Technology Fellowship and Box of Birds, my current company, was awarded an Epic Games Mega Grant for our technical innovation. Our immersive technology collaborations with the University of Technology of Sydney have reached hundreds of thousands.

Stalker / Box of Birds was well supported by the Australia Council from 2009 until being defunded as part of the George Brandis cuts to arts funding in 2015.

As an artist who has represented Australia globally to substantial audiences, I have navigated a career beset with pitfalls. The precariousness of arts wages in the small to medium arts sector means I struggle to raise a family and do not own a home. Many successful artists share this predicament.

I say this not to evoke pity but rather to encourage action to support future generations of artists.

Australia must better support its cultural talent. Art and Culture unify a nation; artists are cultural gardeners defining our pluralistic society. The arts, offering major health and education benefits, are essential for uniting a fracturing society and navigating difficult times.

Action points for the cultural policy:

- Continue supporting First Nations Australian artists (as delivered by Revive).
- Increase direct financial support for the small to medium arts sector and individual artists - the grass roots of cultural excellence. Direct funding is far more effective than trickle-down models.
- Explore and develop universal income models for artists.
- Provide urgent support to the theatre, dance, community, and experimental sectors, which face failure due to inadequate funding.

- Support the Australian Live Performance Export Alliance submission; recognising international engagement as critical to artist careers, Australia's overseas reputation, and the long-term viability of the performing arts ecology.
- Aid artistic innovation – particularly with new pathways for audience engagement. This includes strategic support of new immersive technologies within theatre and dance. This will help keep culture relevant for the Generation Z & Alphas- our audiences and participants of the future.

Thank you for undertaking the Cultural Policy Review.