

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

Moving Words and Pictures

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Moving Words and Pictures is a regional documentary production company focused on the relationship between people, place and history, with a particular interest in community memory, cultural landscapes and regional storytelling.

The five pillars outlined in Revive provide a strong foundation for Australia's cultural future. The recognition that culture is central to identity, wellbeing and national life is important and overdue.

However, there is a significant gap in how place-based cultural work is understood and supported.

While the policy affirms the principle of "a place for every story," it does not yet adequately recognise the practitioners who work within place over time — particularly in regional Australia — or the role this work plays as cultural infrastructure.

In regional communities, culture is not separate from place. It is embedded in rivers, halls, woolsheds, landscapes, and in the people who continue to care for them. These are not simply locations or backdrops. They are repositories of memory, identity and knowledge.

Alongside this sits the depth and continuity of Aboriginal cultural landscapes — living systems of knowledge, story and connection that have existed for tens of thousands of years. In many parts of Australia, these layers exist in parallel, and often intersect, yet remain only partially understood within mainstream cultural narratives.

Supporting work that engages with this complexity — respectfully, collaboratively and over time — is essential to building a fuller and more truthful understanding of place.

At present, cultural infrastructure is still largely understood in terms of institutions: galleries, theatres, collections and organisations. These are essential. But there is another layer of cultural infrastructure outside formal institutions: practitioners embedded in communities, doing the work of listening, translating and shaping stories over time.

Without this layer, much of Australia's cultural memory remains undocumented, fragmented or at risk of being lost.

This is particularly urgent in regional Australia, where histories are complex, contested and deeply tied to land. Supporting this work requires time, trust and continuity, not only short-term project funding.

The next National Cultural Policy should expand its understanding of cultural infrastructure to include place-based practice.

This would involve recognising place-based storytelling as a distinct and essential cultural practice; supporting long-term community-embedded projects rather than one-off outputs; investing in practitioners who work within communities over time; and valuing cultural outcomes beyond economic return, including memory, identity, reconciliation and connection to place.

This approach strengthens multiple pillars of the policy: enabling a genuine "place for every story," building cultural infrastructure beyond major centres, supporting First Nations cultural recognition, and creating deeper audience engagement grounded in lived experience.

Australia's cultural future will not be shaped by institutions alone. It will also be shaped by those working within communities, documenting the stories that define who we are, where we come from, and how we are connected to this land.

If we want to see ourselves more clearly as a nation, we need to support the people doing that work.