

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The words on which I would like to reflect lie in Pillar 2 - \,A place for every story\,.

What are the places which will encourage those with stories to come forward and share them, and receive them from others and ensure that they can be shared and then promulgated in wider society?

And how will those places invite and welcome the newcomer and give structure and eloquence to the stories that they bring?

There has been over recent decades an expansion in the number of regional and suburban arts centres which have enriched the cultural landscape where they have been built but it would, I think, be fair to say that many of them subsist by bringing in existing work from elsewhere.

And there remain vast areas of outer-metropolitan and rural areas which have no access to such facilities, or no facilities which invite the creation of new occasions, offer new structures of activity and the sharing of new stories.

We need facilities which encourage people to tell their own stories, in which they will learn to hear and appreciate other peoples' stories.

And then show participants how those materials can be transformed into shapes that can be experienced and enjoyed outside the walls of those facilities.

And this will require staff with the knowledge and skills that can do those things.

And this in turn requires training that will prepare them to do it.

There is no point building new facilities unless there are staff with the knowledge, experience and skills to animate them.

And the funding to sustain them.

There is already a good body of knowledge about how such activities may be fostered and sustained. To mention but a few, Back to Back theatre, Polyglot Puppet company, Ponycam, Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company and others of which I am unaware

Most of these exist and create their work in relationship to particular groups of people.

Most of them also do it in conditions of considerable poverty, a poverty which all too often threatens their capacity and willingness to continue working.

If we truly want to make Australia "a place for every story" we will need to recognise the need for skills development and the financial support required to make this possible.

And the funding required not only to create centres but centres which are staffed in such a way as to create cultural vitality both through what they bring to the area around and through listening to its stories and showing how they can be transformed.