

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne, is one of Australia's premier visual arts commissioning organisations, and a leader in the small-to-medium (S2M) sector. For over 40 years, ACCA has played an essential role investing in and nurturing generations of leading artists and creative communities, and shaping contemporary art and culture in Australia.

We work directly with artists to commission ambitious new works and produce major exhibitions, alongside education and public programs which engage diverse communities and spark broader conversations about creativity and the world around us.

ACCA's free education programs empower young people to be active cultural citizens. We directly address socio-educational disadvantage through free transport to ACCA and in-school outreach programs in priority cohorts and regional areas.

In the past three years alone, ACCA has supported 200+ artists with paid opportunities, commissioned 268 works, presented 19 major exhibitions, engaged over 270,000 audience members and over 36,700 students and teachers, represented an average of 37% First Nations artists in our program, and invested an average of 84% of our turnover directly in artists and arts workers.

Opportunities and Challenges in Revive's Pillars:

Pillar 1: S2M organisations deliver strong outcomes in First Nations practice and leadership. Policy should expand support of this work, recognising embedding First Nations leadership, governance, ICIP protocols, remuneration, career pathways and programming as core operational activity, not short-term project work.

Pillar 2: S2M organisations already deliver strong outcomes in access, inclusion, wellbeing and representation. Policy should prioritise continuity and expansion of existing organisational capacity over short-term initiatives.

Pillar 3: Artists remain underpaid, with policy needed to recognise them as workers requiring fair, legislated remuneration and appropriate conditions.

Pillar 4: A decade of static/declining investment has weakened S2M organisational capacity, retention and remuneration. Increased operational funding for S2M visual arts will strengthen workforce sustainability, expand audience access and growth, education delivery and community outcomes.

Pillar 5: Investment in audience engagement through contemporary visual arts delivers cultural, educational and social outcomes that extend well beyond the sector. Policy should support S2M organisations to deliver national and international audience engagement, including touring, market development and cultural exchange.

ACCA's NCP Recommendations:

Revive has helped establish important national priorities, however, the visual arts and S2M organisations remain largely absent. ACCA advocates for the NCP to recognise and invest in S2M visual arts organisations as vital infrastructure delivering on the country's key cultural objectives, and to:

- Establish a legislated Visual Arts Council to provide strategic leadership, advocacy and grow investment pathways for the S2M visual arts sector
- Renew and expand multiyear operational investment, including VACDPF, to secure strong S2M cultural infrastructure, fair remuneration and sustained public impact across audiences, access, education and community wellbeing

– Invest in national and international mobility initiatives delivered through S2M organisations to build markets, support touring, and strengthen philanthropy, enterprise and audience connection