

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

United Nations Australian Association (UNAA)

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The United Nations Association of Australia (UNAA) welcomes the National Cultural Policy consultation. As Australia's peak civil-society body promoting the work and values of the UN, the UNAA brings a perspective seldom heard in arts policy debate: the policy's role in advancing the international frameworks Australia has shaped.

### Culture and the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda recognises culture as both an enabler and a driver of sustainable development. We recommend the new policy explicitly link its outcomes to the relevant SDGs, particularly SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities, which includes safeguarding cultural and natural heritage) and SDG 16 (peaceful, inclusive societies). We encourage a clear strategy to ensure a living wage for artists and a strong economic foundation for a diversity of cultural organisations, in recognition of their value to community cohesion, national identity and international diplomacy. SDG target 16.10, which seeks to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, has particular application to the stewardship of First Nations cultural knowledge — including songlines, Dreaming stories, ceremony, dance, visual arts, bark sculpture and practices such as cultural burning — and the systems used to manage and protect that information. Aligning the policy's measurement framework with the SDGs would enable reporting in Australia's Voluntary National Reviews and embed culture in national wellbeing measurement.

### Honouring Australia's UNESCO commitments

Australia is a State Party to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage. The new policy can operationalise these obligations through transparent quadrennial reporting, artist mobility, and protecting cultural expressions in the digital environment. Each pillar should articulate how it advances these treaty commitments.

### First Nations First and UNDRIP

The "First Nations First" pillar is rightly placed at the centre of the policy. We urge it be explicitly framed within Australia's commitments under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly Articles 11, 12, 13 and 31, which protect cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, languages and the right to free, prior and informed consent over cultural materials. Embedding UNDRIP in the policy's design and measurement would strengthen Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protections and align cultural investment with the principles of self-determination.

### Digital, AI and the global ethical frame

Digital tools and artificial intelligence are transforming creative work. Australia endorsed the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in 2021. The new policy should adopt its principles on AI-generated content, fair remuneration for cultural workers whose work trains AI systems, and the protection of human authorship, with particular attention to First Nations creators whose materials face heightened risk of unauthorised use.

A National Cultural Policy that locates Australian creativity within the international frameworks Australia has helped build will be more durable and globally credible. The UNAA welcomes further engagement and can support implementation through our national and state networks.