

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As a professional arts worker with over 20 years of experience in the performing arts and creative industries, I submit this statement in strong support of a refreshed and ambitious National Cultural Policy for Australia—one that possesses \,strong teeth\, and commits new funding alongside its inspirational rhetoric.

My arts journey began long before my professional career, rooted in early exposure to music, literature, and live performance. I recall seeing Polyglot Puppet Theatre's 'Dinos' in a small South Yarra venue, learning violin from a Melbourne Symphony musician, and engaging in daggy but incredibly wholesome community theatre with other young people and dedicated adult volunteers. These experiences taught me that the arts are not merely extracurricular; they are where we find our people and our purpose. Despite the prevailing advice to secure a \,backup" - and I did by pursuing a double degree in Commerce and Arts - the over-riding sense was that I could fall back on the arts as a hobby if I couldn't make a goer out of it as a career. This symbolised the deficit model that the arts have traditionally held in our country.

A bold National Cultural Policy can transform the nation by validating the arts as a viable career path while emphasising that artistic literacy is essential for every citizen, regardless of whether once chooses to pursue it professionally.

**\*\*My Primary Contention: Arts-Led, Cross-Government Integration\*\***

My hope is that arts and culture is recognised as central to the Australian identity. However, for a National Cultural Policy to be effective and visionary, it cannot remain siloed within a single portfolio or agency. Culture is intrinsic to health (via art therapy and well-being), education (through critical thinking and empathy), foreign affairs and trade (soft power and diplomacy), and urban planning (public spaces and community hubs). Treating the arts as a standalone sector fails to leverage its full economic and societal potential.

We require a framework where the Arts are central to leading the national vision, and where Treasury, Health, Education, Trade and Infrastructure departments are mandated to integrate cultural outcomes into their core objectives. A \,whole-of-government\, approach ensures that artistic considerations are embedded in national decision-making, from the design and place-making of a new hospital to the national school curriculum.

My dream is a policy where every Australian, whether as a participant or an audience member, recognises the genesis of the creative act and its power to nourish our individual and collective souls. We need a policy that moves beyond inspiration to structural integration, ensuring that the arts are not an afterthought (or \,just a hobby\,), but a fundamental pillar of a thriving Australia. By committing to a cross-government vision, we can cultivate a nation that values the arts and creativity as vital components of our identity and future prosperity.