

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I ask the Australian Government to recognise street dance, battles, cyphers and jams as legitimate contemporary cultural practice in the next National Cultural Policy. This includes hip hop, breaking, popping, locking, krump, waacking, vogue, dancehall, Afro dance and other street and club-based forms. Street dance should be supported on its own terms, not only when it is translated into theatre, sport, youth-program or commercial-entertainment models.

Revive's pillars provide a strong framework. First Nations First should remain First Nations-led, and the broader lesson for policy is that communities must hold power over how their culture is assessed and supported. A Place for Every Story requires recognition of grassroots and culturally diverse practices. Street Dance in Focus shows 64% of surveyed street dance community members identify as CALD, 31% as LGBTIQ+, 54% as women, and most are young. National participation data shows 5% of Australians attend street dance or hip hop, comparable with contemporary dance and ballet; yet Cypher Culture's preliminary funding review suggests street dance has received only 1.6% of Creative Australia dance funding since Revive commenced. This gap needs correction.

Under Centrality of the Artist, dancers need fair pay, pathways and peer assessment that understand battles, cyphers, jams, public-space practice, collective authorship and self-taught learning as artistic work. The policy should establish dedicated Street Dance funding allocations in Creative Australia, with street dance practitioners on peer panels, and support grant-writing, mentoring, touring, international exchange and digital creation. It should also establish a dedicated Community Arts and Cultural Development body, because street dance communities are not only performances; they are ecosystems. Surveyed participants include performers, educators, choreographers, producers, arts workers, volunteers, media makers and audiences.

Strong Cultural Infrastructure must include everyday cultural infrastructure, not only major venues. Seventy-six percent of surveyed dancers practise in public or community spaces and 60% say there are not enough places to train, practise or jam nearby. The next policy should work with all levels of government, arts centres, councils, libraries, schools, universities and community venues to create free or affordable spaces with safe floors, shelter, lighting, toilets, transport access and permission to gather without being moved on.

Engaging the Audience should recognise that street dance audiences are active participants. More than half of surveyed dancers attend street dance events weekly, many travel interstate or overseas, and almost all watch battles or events online. Supporting street dance would build participation, community connection, youth engagement, cultural exchange and Australia's international creative presence. If there is a place for every story, there must be a place for street dance.