

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual

Karen Hall



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The new National Cultural Policy must address pathways in the arts, particularly for regional arts.

In relation to Pillar 2, A Place for Every Story, vibrant regional communities require sustained and focused resourcing so that artists and arts workers are able to grow and sustain careers in their communities. Longer-term resourcing and infrastructure that is about skill-sharing, not just buildings, should be prioritised. This enables the development of collaborative and inclusive cultural expression. Cultural policy should address community arts and cultural development.

For Pillar 3, Centrality of the Artist, arts education needs to be valued and made more accessible. In my role as an arts educator in a regional university, I've seen how people thrive when given opportunities to pursue their dreams. However, cuts and funding pressures make tertiary arts education increasingly out of reach for regional and low socio-economic students. Reversing Job Ready Graduates and increasing support for students and for educational organisations will mean that artistic careers are not dependent on family financial capacity. Removing tax on arts prizes and grants, and generally bolstering investment in supporting artists (which then multiplies the benefits within their communities) is also required.

In relation to Pillar 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure, a genuinely vibrant cultural sector requires deep and ongoing commitment to peer review and arms-length from governments, so that artwork can be innovative, engaged and speka to the present moment without being politicised. Strong cultural infrastructure also requires reg=cognition of the role of small-to-medium arts organisations in nurturing emerging artists, developing new work, and being willing to be agile and take risks. Supporting small-to-medium arts organisations can be done through longer-term funding cycles, provision of training and professional development, and programs that cpnnect up similar organisations across national and international scales so that they can learn from each other. Cultural infrastructure might also address questions of access to facilities and equipment required for specialised art and craft production, which are not always feasible for individuals to invest in as emerging artists, and not always available commercially in regional spaces. How might the facilities and equipment held in arts education spaces be opened up as cultural hubs?

Finally, for Pillar 5: Engaging the Audience, we need to recognise that engagement requires relationships, especially in regional settings. Longer-term thinking enables engagement to be built into projects, unfolding over time, and seeing inclusion as an invitation for creative response, not as compliance.