

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The arts must be well and fully funded. They are as important to wellbeing and mental resilience in Australian communities as sport.

Funding and access to grants should not focus just on challenging and violent, arcane, hyper-political content as endorsed by elite self-named radical groups. So often \,challenging\, and \,dark\, content find supporters only amongst an in-crowd. Funding should be porous, transparent, and flow down to a very broad audience. A healthily diverse arts community and arts production ought to take cognisance of popular and community cultural taste, formats and values. Accessible, enjoyable, entertaining cultural formats serve and speak to many audiences, from pub rock to classical ballet. They should be valued as much as so-called challenging practices (which are often boring and predictable), partly because artforms that encourage participation and self-expression have major benefits in terms of social cohesion, in terms of wellbeing, in terms of positivity and communication. People who feel engaged and fulfilled are not only happier and healthier in themselves but feel as if they belong and are not alienated from a broader community. Calm and relaxed people will be more open and giving and can leap empathetically across boundaries. The flow-on via social health and a sense of wellbeing and connection will offer healing and acceptance when Australia is increasingly ruptured by angry divisions and embittered oppositional stances.

Digital technologies in many cases have opened up skillsets and also provided platforms for a new range of creators who have often developed audiences independent of cultural institutions. Attention should be paid to those whose voices (including working and middle class makers of all origins, even anglo-european) are overwritten by gate keepers and selectors. Cultural policy in Australia tends to only endorse practices and personalities who are already endorsed by high level institutions and their staff. Wealth and cultural privilege speak loudly within assessment criteria in Australian cultural broking.

Whilst we pay much attention to race and ethnicity in terms of a new cultural policy, we should pay equal attention to issues such accessibility, disability, able-ism, age, gender, class, wealth, educational opportunities - all of these latter factors impact upon the level of access and ease that an individual may experience around the arts. Disability, age, gender, cultural-literacy are issues that should be equally considered as race when formulating cultural policy.

Given the first nations first policy placed within the new cultural policy- that should be the benchmark for all possible access to the arts. Especially in light of new government health and disability policies that in 2026 disenfranchise vast sectors of the community, especially the aged, the disabled, including invisible disabilities such as the neurodiverse, the chronically ill and auto-immune, long covid, CF/ME conditions, the arts have a massive responsibility in ensuring that cultural policies offer a platform where people with a range of disabilities, especially unseen disabilities, can be welcomed as essential participants in public culture and welcomed on their own terms that do not speak down to and over them.

Curating, Academia, Arts Writing, Critique, Festivals should be able to self critique and accept difference. Lobbyists [REDACTED] should not distort democratic and pluralist platforms with partisan demands