

National Cultural Policy Submission.

I am the Founder of Perth Symphony Orchestra. I was recognised in 2019 as West Australian of the Year for Arts and Culture. I am passionate about playing a role in transforming Australia to a culturally confident nation, proud of our arts and artists, and ensuring arts are viewed as a driving force in Australia's future.

Australia's next National Cultural Policy should recognise creativity and cultural participation not as discretionary activity, but as national capability infrastructure essential to the country's future prosperity, cohesion and influence.

Any future cultural policy must also recognise that Australia's greatest cultural strength lies in the leadership and knowledge of the world's oldest continuing cultures, which should sit at the heart of Australia's creative identity and future cultural confidence.

For too long, the arts have been positioned primarily as something audiences consume, rather than something Australians actively do. Participation in creative activity must become a national objective. A culturally confident society is more connected, innovative, resilient and capable of addressing complex challenges across every sector.

The arts should therefore be embedded within broader national priorities including health, education, productivity, innovation, diplomacy and economic diversification. Creative thinking is consistently identified as one of the most important future workforce skills, yet Australia continues to treat the arts as peripheral rather than foundational to preparing people for the future economy.

A national cultural policy should establish structures that enable the arts to contribute meaningfully across government portfolios and industries. This includes integrating arts participation into health and wellbeing strategies, embedding and elevating creativity within education and leadership development, and recognising cultural participation as essential social infrastructure that strengthens community connection, identity and belonging. This requires a structure that ensures there are strong lines of communication and collaboration within the arts sector, from community organisations, educational institutions, amateur companies and elite professional organisations. Ensuring the sector is structured to collaborate and deliver arts into communities will enable far greater participation and impact.

Australia also needs a more strategic approach to cultural diplomacy and creative export. We should aspire to become not simply an importer and presenter of global culture, but a globally recognised producer of creativity, stories and experiences. This requires stronger collaboration between the arts, business and government to identify export opportunities, build international partnerships and position Australian creativity as a driver of economic growth and national influence. Innovation in the arts is critical, and investing in and championing Australia's creative production will have lasting benefits.

Major Australian companies should play a greater role within this ecosystem, not only through sponsorship, but as strategic collaborators and champions for creativity's role in innovation and national development. They should be funded to champion this.

To achieve this, Australia must invest more seriously in leadership within the arts sector itself. If government and industry are to collaborate confidently with arts organisations, the sector must attract and retain exceptional leadership talent. This requires longer funding cycles, leadership development and investment models that support strategic planning, workforce stability and leadership remuneration comparable to other sectors.

Arts organisations should be empowered and trusted to deliver nation-building outcomes, not solely artistic outcomes.

A successful national cultural policy will position creativity not at the margins of society, but at the centre of Australia's national strategy — strengthening our economy, building community cohesion, shaping national identity and enhancing Australia's influence on the world stage.

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Arts Entrepreneur, Leader and Advocate



Founder, The RARE Company

Founder Perth Symphony Orchestra

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