

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

Belinda Newick



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is Belinda Newick, an Education Manager, TAFE sector, with 30 years of experience in my own arts practice, 19 years as an educator, Jewellery and Object Design Program at Melbourne Polytechnic, JamFactory Alumni and an MA of Creative Industries. The future of creative arts education, specifically jewellery/objects, craft practice, design, nationally and internationally across education sectors matters to me.

The courses I manage cover Apprenticeship training with Industry for the Manufacturing jewellery trade and a creative art jewellery, Advanced Diploma. This dual perspective—artistic and technical—has always aligned closely with Melbourne Polytechnic's unique position in the jewellery education space.

I will address Pillar 3 and 4 from the framework of Australia's cultural policy.

Creative arts courses nationally and in New Zealand have been disestablished over recent years and this is having an impact on our industry. Arts education is critical to the development of cultural policy and the ongoing creative health of Australia. At MP, we are fortunate to annually receive positive enrolments, making our offering of jewellery courses from Cert II, Cert II and Advanced Diploma, well subscribed.

Despite the changing conditions, digitalisation and AI advancements, we find that students are genuinely invested in learning to make with their hands, to slow down the pace of the visual noise and stimuli around them. Students derive satisfaction, and positive change from the transformation of learning new skills at the bench, many applying traditional techniques that are unchanged over many years. The innate urge to learn new skills, to create and resolve tangible outcomes applying tacit knowledge is evident and profound for many of our students.

In the new National Cultural Policy, I would like to see:

policy that understands the rich knowledge base of educators/practicing makers, who are invested in sharing skills, building capacity and teaching the next generation of makers.

investment in Vocational training with options for pathways for students to continue further study.

A shift in the focus on higher education being of more value than VET education, HE does not suit all learners, nor all people in society.

continuing to fund education institutions, investing in maintaining facilities and equipment and at the same time not continuing to position arts courses and degrees with high fee cost to students. There is an imbalance in the costs of arts education relative to Stem and other courses. This devalues creative thinking, critical thinking and does build cultural capital.

building long term sustainability for arts workers in Australia would support more emerging and mid-career artists, rather than large arts organisations, more even distribution of funding to allow more people to be lifted in their arts practices.

Acknowledgment that to design and handmade arts/craft pieces, artists require time that is not aligned with the fast pace of contemporary life. More support for artists and educators to spend less time justifying their currency and more time for the development of new ideas, innovations and for the practice of slow making in a fast world.