

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the renewal of the National Cultural Policy. I'm contributing simply as an audience member; someone who isn't an artist, but who has been deeply shaped by stories and characters. The arts have always been an important part of how I connect with the world, so I wanted to share my experience.

For me, stories are not just entertainment. They help me understand myself and make sense of what I'm feeling. I've seen, in my own life and in the lives of people around me, how stories and characters across theatre, TV and film can support mental health and emotional wellbeing.

A scene, a storyline, or a character's journey can make someone feel less alone, offer comfort during a difficult time, or give them the words for something they've been struggling to express. These moments stay with people - they matter.

Characters especially can offer a sense of belonging. They can show us that our experiences are valid and shared, even when we don't see that reflected in our everyday lives. For many people, especially those who feel isolated or misunderstood, stories can become a lifeline.

This is why diverse Australian stories are so important. When our stages and screens reflect a wide range of experiences, such as race, religion, queer, disability and neurodivergence, audiences are more likely to find characters who resonate with them. It's about giving people the chance to feel seen, understood and connected. These are not small things; they're essential to a healthy, connected society.

Supporting diverse storytelling also means supporting the artists who create it. Neurodivergent people, for example, are a meaningful part of our community, yet their experiences are often simplified or misunderstood. Neurodivergent writers and performers bring perspectives that are rarely shown in mainstream stories. When they're supported, audiences benefit. And when their stories are told authentically, people who relate to those experiences feel recognised rather than stereotyped.

I hope the National Cultural Policy continues to recognise the emotional value of storytelling, and ensures that diverse Australian stories, including neurodivergent ones, are funded, supported and celebrated.

Stories shape us. Characters stay with us. And the wellbeing they offer is something worth protecting.