

Logan City Council
Logan Art Gallery
Corner Wembley Road and Jacaranda Avenue
Logan Central QLD 4114



Date: 21 May 2026

Office for the Arts

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
Australian Government

Logan Art Gallery Contribution to the National Cultural Policy Consultation (2026)

To whom it may concern,

Logan Art Gallery is an award-winning cultural venue established in 1995, recognised for its dynamic exhibition program, strong community focus, and commitment to accessibility and inclusion. Located in Logan Central, the Gallery presents a diverse range of visual arts, craft and design practices across four exhibition spaces, alongside a vibrant program of workshops, events and public engagement initiatives that serve local, regional and national audiences. Central to its mission is the celebration of cultural diversity, including the ongoing presentation of First Nations art and major touring exhibitions from leading Australian institutions, ensuring that high-quality artistic experiences are accessible to all members of the community.

This submission is made by Dr Christopher Bennie, Coordinator of Logan Art Gallery, an artist, curator and arts professional with extensive experience across Australia's leading cultural institutions. In this capacity, Chris oversees the strategic direction, curatorial programming and community engagement initiatives of the Gallery, positioning it as a key regional hub for artistic excellence, cultural dialogue and innovative practice. This perspective reflects both the operational realities and future potential of regional galleries within Australia's evolving cultural landscape.

Logan Art Gallery welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of Australia's next National Cultural Policy. As a regional gallery situated within one of the most culturally diverse municipalities in the country, our experience directly reflects both the successes of Revive and the opportunities for its evolution. Our work with the National Gallery of Australia, through the Art Across Australia initiatives, has been particularly impactful, demonstrating how national partnerships can meaningfully extend cultural access while also highlighting areas where future policy settings can better respond to the complexity of local communities.

Through the NGA's Art Cases program, Logan Art Gallery will present three cases across 2025–2026. This initiative has been transformative in advancing Pillar 5: Engaging the Audience and Pillar 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure. The tactile, hands-on nature of the Art Cases, where audiences can physically engage with artworks, offers a rare and powerful form of accessibility.

For a regional audience, this creates an immediate and intimate connection with the national collection, breaking down perceived barriers between communities and major institutions. The program is efficient, agile, and cost-effective, providing a one-stop model for audience engagement that supports local programming capacity. However, there remains an opportunity

to expand the scale and depth of these experiences to further enrich audience participation and learning outcomes, particularly where scale combined with tactility could further dissolve barriers between cultural institutions and the public.

Equally significant has been our participation in the Sharing the National Collection program, which has enabled Logan Art Gallery to curate and present a major exhibition of international video art. Featuring Bill Viola, Bruce Nauman, William Kentridge, Tracey Moffatt, Sophie Calle and Richard Serra, this project exemplifies Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story and Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist. It not only revitalises historical video art practices within the context of contemporary digital saturation but also positions Logan as a nationally relevant cultural venue. This opportunity will strengthen local artistic ambition and provide audiences with access to globally significant works that would otherwise remain geographically and institutionally distant. It also aligns with Logan City Council's long-term vision, reinforcing the role of visual culture in shaping civic identity, perception, and aspiration.

Logan Art Gallery also demonstrates strong leadership under Pillar 1: First Nations First. Through annual initiatives such as the Reginald Knox Memorial Exhibition, touring projects including *Three Echoes: Western Desert art and Clay on Country*, and solo exhibitions by local First Nations artists including Aunty Shirley Yumala Collins and Sally Terare, the Gallery spearheads First Nations cultural expression and leadership. These programs are vital, locally embedded, and culturally meaningful, contributing to both artistic excellence and community connection.

However, our experience also reveals critical tension within Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story. While First Nations programming is essential and appropriately prioritised, there remains a structural imbalance in representing the broader spectrum of Logan's cultural diversity. With more than 230 cultures represented in the region, there is a growing need for policy mechanisms that support equitable cultural expression beyond existing frameworks. Current funding models, touring opportunities and partnership structures tend to favour established narratives, limiting the Gallery's capacity to engage deeply with emerging or underrepresented cultural communities.

The National Portrait Gallery pilot project, realised through *Thread: Connecting stories and community*, has provided an important test case for new models of collaboration between national and regional institutions. Co-designed with Logan Art Gallery, local artists and community participants, the project sought to link works from the national collection with locally grounded narratives through consultation, workshops and co-creation processes. The resulting exhibition combined historical and contemporary portraiture with newly commissioned works and live, durational making processes, including the creation of a possum skin cloak led by artist Kyra Mancktelow in collaboration with community and Elders. As a pilot, it has demonstrated the potential for deeper forms of engagement and offered a framework for how national institutions might work more closely with local contexts to generate culturally responsive programming.

At the same time, the project reveals the challenges inherent in attempting to decentralise institutional authority. While the intent was to foreground community-led perspectives and broaden cultural representation, the curatorial framing and operational structures of the National Portrait Gallery inevitably shaped outcomes in ways that reasserted traditional hierarchies. Despite involving a culturally diverse cohort of participants, the final emphasis remained predominantly aligned with First Nations narratives, an important focus, but one that did not fully reflect the breadth of Logan's multicultural identity. This highlights a key paradox. Initiatives designed to disrupt institutional norms can inadvertently reinforce them if governance, authorship, and decision-making remain centrally controlled. For regional galleries such as Logan, future policy settings should prioritise genuinely shared authority, longer lead times for community development, and flexible frameworks that allow local contexts to determine both process and outcome.

This challenge represents an opportunity for the next National Cultural Policy to expand its scope. Strengthening support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities through

targeted funding, commissioning models, and long-term engagement frameworks would better reflect contemporary Australia. Enabling regional galleries to act as testing grounds for dialogue-based, community-driven projects would support deeper cultural exchange and participation.

In conclusion, Logan Art Gallery strongly supports continued investment in national programs such as Art Across Australia, which have demonstrably increased access, strengthened partnerships and elevated regional cultural infrastructure. At the same time, we advocate for a more expansive and genuinely inclusive approach to cultural diversity, one that reflects the lived realities of Australia's communities and ensures equitable representation across the full spectrum of cultural expression. Through this, the National Cultural Policy can continue to strengthen not only access to the arts, but the shared cultural identity of the nation.

Recommendations for Future Policy Development

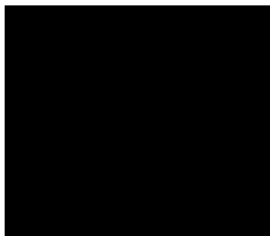
To support regional galleries such as Logan Art Gallery to deliver on the ambitions of the National Cultural Policy, the following actions are recommended:

- Targeted funding to support additional staffing, particularly roles focused on culturally diverse engagement and community outreach
- Dedicated resources for staff to work outside the gallery, building relationships with cultural groups, informal networks, and communities who may not identify within traditional arts structures
- Programs that recognise and legitimise expanded creative practices, including digital creators, social media makers, designers, and community-based practitioners
- Investment in engaging younger demographics, particularly audiences and creatives aged 20–40, through flexible, peer-led and digitally integrated programming
- Professional development pathways to support local creatives to build sustainable practices, improve production capability, and engage professionally with the sector
- Increased operational funding to enable long-term project development rather than short-term, outcome-driven delivery
- Expansion of gallery infrastructure, including storage, production areas, and digital systems to support ambitious programming
- Sustained growth in staffing levels to match the increasing complexity of regional gallery operations
- Partnership models that embed shared decision-making, local curatorial authority, and flexible frameworks responsive to place
- Funding for experimental and community-led projects that allow regional galleries to test new models of participation and cultural exchange
- Recognition of regional galleries as sites of leadership and innovation, not only as delivery partners for touring programs

Future policy should also prioritise stronger support for the creative sector through more equitable access to funding, with streamlined application and reporting processes that reduce unnecessary red tape. A more accessible and responsive funding environment would enable artists and creative practitioners to focus on developing their work, building viable careers, and contributing to a sustainable and growing sector. By investing directly in artists and removing barriers to participation, policy settings can better nurture creative ambition, strengthen local ecosystems, and ensure the long-term resilience of Australia's cultural life.

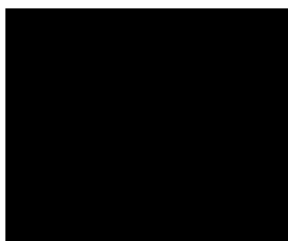
These measures would enable Logan Art Gallery to more effectively reflect and engage its diverse community, strengthen local creative ecosystems, and contribute meaningfully to Australia's cultural future.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Christopher Bennie
Coordinator, Logan Art Gallery
Logan City Council

Endorsed by:



Manager Libraries and Creative Industries | Libraries and Creative Industries Branch
Logan City Council

