

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

Faith Taylor



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As an artist based in Townsville, it is my belief that the next National Cultural Policy would strongly benefit from making regional, remote and rural communities central to its design.

According to the ABS, over half of the First Nations populations live in regional/remote/rural areas– and in Queensland, areas such as Townsville and Cairns have a higher percentage of First Nations people in comparison to the total population. Therefore supporting regional/remote/rural areas means supporting First Nations artists and voices. Continuing to focus funding in big cities ignores over half of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander populations, preventing essential stories and voices being heard.

It's hard to feel that the Government is “reflecting the breadth of our stories and the contribution of all Australians” when the regional/remote/rural arts are constantly begging for support and funding. In Townsville, the majority of the professional shows at the local theatre are touring from major cities. While these cities receive funding to tour to us, local professional companies struggle to produce shows in whatever venues they can source. What does it say about a town when the local theatre's season does not reflect the talent of our local arts community? How can we create art and share stories that are uniquely ours when, rather than supporting local artists, instead artists from big cities are given preference for support and funding?

As an emerging artist in regional Australia, I do not feel supported by the Government. I believe that regional/remote/rural Australia's emerging artists are constantly overlooked. With very little options in terms of an education in the arts, artists are forced to move to big cities– a serious financial burden that also deprives that area of artists that could be contributing to the culture in that community. There are no incentives for artists, and going into copious amounts of debt seems to be an unspoken requirement to having a viable career in this industry.

In my community, there is strong local support for the arts. This can be seen by the success of companies such as TheatreiNQ and DanceNorth. Therefore, rather than introducing new initiatives, take time to investigate what already exists. In Townsville, TheatreiNQ's acting training program, The Bridge Project, has produced numerous industry-ready actors that positively contribute to the culture of Queensland. By funding and supporting the existing businesses and infrastructure in regional/remote/rural areas, you create opportunities for artists and the community alike.

By overlooking regional/remote/rural communities, you limit opportunities for connecting people at home and abroad. There should be more opportunities for regional/remote/rural entertainment to tour and share their stories with a wider audience. Additionally, pushing marketing for local productions would create possibilities for tourism in these areas and bring money into the community.

I would like to see money being distributed equitably, in a way that supports the cultural identity of regional/remote/rural areas, thus giving us the capacity to create and perform our own art.