

To the National Cultural Policy Review,

My name is Brad Bellette. I run the Bellette Group of Companies: bellette, HutSix, Block G, and Ride Together Australia. We're based here in Alice Springs. I'm writing to back the submission from Alice Springs Cinema.

I've been running businesses here since 1998. There aren't many places in this town where everyone just shows up together, week after week, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, families and elders, locals and visitors. The cinema is one of them. It's the only cinema for more than a thousand kilometres in any direction. In a town as isolated and complex as Alice Springs, that kind of shared space matters more than most people realise.

What Rene and her team do goes well past running a business. They screen films for remote schools. They host the Travelling Film Festival, MASIFF, NIFFA. They run language films for our Indian, Pilipino, Nepalese and Japanese communities. They put on LGBTQIA+ screenings. None of this is subsidised. It happens because a small independent cinema in a remote town decided it should. If the cinema can't keep doing it, nobody else here can pick it up.

Regional cinemas like ours aren't just entertainment venues. They're anchors. They anchor main streets. They anchor families' weekly routines. They anchor the cultural life of towns that don't have galleries, theatres, or arts centres on every corner. A cinema in Alice Springs is not the same thing as a cinema in a capital city, and a national cultural policy should recognise that.

Australian stories deserve places where Australians actually experience them together. Here, that place is on Todd Mall.

Brad Bellette Director, Bellette Group of Companies Alice Springs NT

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