

**National Cultural Policy Submission**

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Arts and cultures aren't just products to showcase in museums, galleries, or events—they're living practices that reflect ways of being, doing, and knowing. Language is the medium through which these practices are created and passed on. For First Nations stories to be central to policy, First Nations languages must be valued and nurtured as cultural capital at both community and national levels. This means policies should create opportunities for people to learn these languages based on their background and knowledge, while recognising the importance of infrastructure to support skill-building and capability. In contexts where First Nations languages remain the primary means of communication, communities need strong infrastructure. It's about understanding how the language works to convey ideas, connecting with cultural sites through learning on Country with the right people, and expanding into new areas of knowledge. With so few speakers of each Australian language, market-driven models can't sustain the creation and publication of the full range of oral, visual, and written literature. Institutions, from education providers to emerging community language and arts organisations, will need support to involve a range of workers—not just in the arts—developing a range of skills including governance. Support should also include spaces for collecting and storing data in ways that keep ownership and access within the language community, so they can decide what knowledge is shared, with whom, and when.