National Cultural Policy - Screen Queensland Submission

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Introduction

Screen Queensland welcomes the Australian Government's commitment to developing a new National Cultural Policy that builds on the foundations established through *Revive*.

As Queensland's screen agency, Screen Queensland invests in locally made film, television, online content and digital games, while attracting interstate and international production. It supports workforce development, industry events and festivals, and operate screen production studios in Brisbane and Cairns.

Combined with Queensland's locations, incentives and skilled workforce, this infrastructure has helped drive significant growth across the state's screen sector.

Screen Queensland acknowledges the positive impact of the Australian Government's 30% Digital Games Tax Offset, and the increase of the Location Offset from 16.5% to 30%. These settings have strengthened Australia's global competitiveness, attracted foreign investment, created jobs, supported skills development and provided greater market certainty for the screen industry.

Screen Queensland works closely with local governments, Queensland Government, Screen Australia, Ausfilm and other industry stakeholders to support a connected and sustainable screen ecosystem.

Throughout this submission, "screen" refers to film, television, streaming, animation and games unless otherwise stated.

Sector Challenges and Opportunities

The screen sector contributes strongly to all five pillars of the National Cultural Policy. The next phase should focus on coordinated, future-focused policy settings that address emerging challenges and opportunities.

A Screen Ecosystem Approach

Federal government investment should be strategically coordinated across the ecosystem to maximise impact and long-term sustainability.

A core policy challenge is ensuring Australians continue to create, own, distribute and monetise Australian stories in an increasingly platform-driven global media environment.

The screen and games sectors operate within a two-speed economy. Some areas are experiencing strong growth and workforce pressures, while others — particularly in regional areas — face barriers to participation and market access. Policy responses should therefore be targeted rather than one-size-fits-all.

Federal government investment remains fundamental to the screen sector, particularly when federal and state funding work together. However, many existing funding mechanisms were designed for a less globalised industry. The next National Cultural Policy presents an opportunity to modernise these settings to strengthen long-term sector outcomes.

This includes better aligning current federal tax incentives with workforce development, supporting business capability alongside project funding, encouraging private investment through targeted incentives, and exploring new financing models such as low-cost loans and private-investment strategies. Lessons from the technology, innovation and start-up sectors could also inform new approaches to cultural investment.

Opportunity exists to move beyond a grants-based approach to focus on IP ownership, audience development, distribution, discoverability, sustainable careers, business growth and long-term enterprise creation.

Reframing the Value of Australian Culture

Australia has successfully used national campaigns to shift public attitudes and behaviours. Similar ambition is needed to position culture not as an industry subsidy, but as national infrastructure that strengthens identity, social cohesion, trust and economic opportunity in addition to Made in Australia.

This is also important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders storytelling, where screen content plays a vital role in sharing diverse Indigenous perspectives with audiences nationally and internationally and maximising economic opportunities for Indigenous creatives.

A strong evidence base is needed to better articulate the economic, cultural and social value generated by the screen and games sectors, including employment, exports, innovation, international investment and place identity. This work is vital to demonstrating investment effectiveness.

Australian screen content helps maintain cultural distinctiveness in an English-dominated global market (think *Bluey*), strengthens national identity, builds international soft power and supports tourism, education and trade. Cultural and economic outcomes are increasingly interconnected and should be recognised as such in policy design.

National Coordination with State Flexibility

The next National Cultural Policy should strengthen national coordination while preserving the flexibility for states and territories to respond to local strengths and industry needs. This includes greater alignment across tax policy, workforce development, data collection, infrastructure planning and industry capability.

Screen Queensland supports the increasing focus on national data collection and evidence-building, including initiatives such as Screen *Australia's Production Infrastructure and Capacity Analysis* (PICA), which provides valuable state-level insights to inform policy and investment decisions.

Building the Evidence Base

A national priority could be the development of a stronger framework for measuring the full value of cultural investment.

While governments can readily measure production expenditure, jobs and exports, they often struggle to quantify broader outcomes such as social cohesion, cultural participation, civic trust, creative capability and national identity.

The lead-up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games (2032 Games) presents a unique opportunity to strengthen this evidence base and position Australian storytelling as a nation-building asset.

Future measurement frameworks should include audience engagement with local stories, cultural participation, talent retention, private investment, IP ownership, educational and tourism impacts, and the relationship between storytelling and social belonging.

Without better measures, policy debates risk defaulting to short-term commercial metrics that undervalue the broader contribution of Australian culture.

Future-Focused Policy Design

The next National Cultural Policy must remain adaptive in response to rapid technological and behavioural change.

Artificial intelligence (AI), platform disruption, digital convergence, audience fragmentation and evolving workforce models are reshaping the creative economy. Policy settings should encourage innovation, experimentation and cross-sector collaboration while ensuring Australian creators and businesses remain globally competitive.

Australia's cultural future will increasingly depend on supporting creators and industries working across screen, games, digital, interactive and emerging technologies. This includes recognising how Australians engage with culture through screens every day and ensuring Australian content remains visible and discoverable.

The 2032 Games also presents a significant opportunity to showcase Australian stories to global audiences through new digital and interactive formats, reinforcing the importance of future-focused cultural policy.

Screen Queensland Response to the Policy Pillars

Pillar 1: First Nations First

Screen Queensland recognises the cultural and economic importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative excellence and self-determination.

In the screen sector, investment should focus on:

- Elevating Indigenous screen content as a cultural export with global artistic, cultural and commercial value.
- Supporting stories from across Australia, including North Queensland and the Torres Strait, through targeted investment in regional and remote businesses.
- Strengthening talent and leadership pathways at all career stages, including supporting established practitioners to access global markets.
- Expanding production-linked training, paid pathways and culturally safe workforce models across screen, games and emerging technologies.
- Growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander -owned screen businesses to increase creative control, governance and cultural authority.
- Protecting Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and addressing the implications of AI for representation and ownership.

Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story

Australia's cultural landscape should reflect the full diversity of contemporary Australian experience.

In the screen sector, investment should focus on:

- Encouraging Australians to engage with local content through stronger accessibility, discoverability and participation.
- Recognising digital games as a major storytelling medium, export industry and driver of innovation.
- Supporting diverse voices across content creation, distribution and audience engagement.
- Strengthening regional and remote participation by addressing barriers to infrastructure, skills, funding and market access.
- Building evidence of the cultural, social and economic value generated by regional screen activity.
- Preserving space for experimentation, emerging creators and new formats outside traditional models.

Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist

Creative practitioners should be recognised as creators, workers, entrepreneurs and innovators.

In the screen sector, investment should focus on:

- Supporting sustainable careers alongside project funding in an increasingly freelance, portfolio-based and technology-driven workforce.
- Addressing workforce challenges including skills shortages, mid-career attrition, fatigue and limited progression pathways.
- Investing in industry-led workforce development through paid placements, mentorship, on-the-job learning and leadership opportunities.
- Strengthening business capability, recognising creatives as IP owners, entrepreneurs and exporters.
- Supporting creators and businesses to respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by AI.

Pillar 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Long-term investment in cultural infrastructure is essential to sector growth and resilience.

In the screen sector, investment should focus on:

- Building the evidence base for the cultural, social, economic and export value of screen and games.
- Supporting infrastructure across facilities, technology, supply chains, exhibition networks and workforce capability.
- Leveraging government investment to attract private capital and support new financing models, including low-cost loans.
- Expanding market access through co-productions, international partnerships and new distribution models.
- Investing in skills, creative hubs, digital connectivity and coordinated long-term planning.
- Supporting emerging technologies including virtual production, AI-enabled workflows and cloud-based production.
- Reducing regional disadvantage through distributed production models and digital infrastructure.
- Strengthening innovation, leadership and business capability across the sector's predominantly SME-based screen and games industries.

Pillar 5: Engaging the Audience

Australian stories must continue to connect with audiences at home and abroad.

In the screen sector, investment should focus on:

- Strengthening access, discoverability, audience development and digital distribution of Australian content.
- Encouraging engagement with Australian stories to support civic pride, cultural participation and social cohesion.
- Responding to changing audience behaviours through games, interactive experiences, short-form content and creator-led ecosystems.
- Expanding export pathways and international engagement to support cultural diplomacy and global brand building.
- Improving audience data and insights to inform creators, businesses and policymakers.
- Ensuring all Australians can access and participate in culture regardless of location, background or circumstance.

Conclusion

Screen Queensland welcomes the development of a new National Cultural Policy that builds on the foundations of *Revive* while responding to the changing realities of Australia's creative economy.

Queensland's screen and games industries demonstrate the cultural, social and economic value of sustained investment in storytelling, talent, infrastructure and innovation.

The next National Cultural Policy is an opportunity to position culture as a strategic national asset and invest confidently in Australia's creative future.