



GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A New National Cultural Policy

Western Australian Government submission, 12 June 2026

Consultation to inform the next National Cultural Policy (NCP)

The Western Australian (WA) Government is dedicated to championing, supporting and growing our creative industries, to foster a vibrant and creative economy.

In 2024, Creative WAⁱ - A 10 year vision to grow and sustain our creative ecosystem was released by the WA Government. Creative WA brings together initiatives across government and explores key partnerships to ensure the creative sector can deliver, and benefit from, improved social, cultural and economic outcomes for WA.

Creative WA's priorities are to strengthen the sector, share stories and celebrate place, and increase access and participation for all Western Australians. These strategic priorities will help direct decision-making and resources and provide the building blocks for a thriving creative ecosystem that enriches the lives of all Western Australians.

In Western Australia, a wide range of initiatives led by state and local governments, working in partnership with communities, place culture at the centre. These include supporting First Nations artists and creative enterprises through the promotion of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP); implementing the recently launched *Jina: Western Australia's Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2026–2030*; and providing services such as the Aboriginal History WA family history research program.

WA's creative industries have been identified as one of the nine focus industries to drive economic diversification in Diversify WA, the WA Government's economic development framework.

Pillar 1: First Nations First

Cultural knowledge, the importance of on-Country practice and succession planning must be further acknowledged in the NCP as *work* and resourced as such.

The transferral of knowledge and language, both living and ancient through the First Nations cultural workforce is central to reconciliation, community-led governance and increasing future career pathways for First Nations people.

To achieve equitable access to diverse income, barriers to philanthropic funding for First Nations arts organisations may be overcome with consultation and co-design for practical application.

Like other jurisdictions the WA Government is committed to the development of opportunities to showcase culture including through the development of cultural centres and places including the Aboriginal Cultural Centre.

The development and ongoing curation of these and other spaces through institutions such as museums, art galleries and meeting places needs to be a consideration in the national policy setting, and its relationships to Closing the Gap including Priority Reforms.

Actions:

- Develop a Cultural Worker employment program modelled on, but separate from, the national Indigenous Rangers Programⁱⁱ (named Aboriginal Rangers Program in WA).
- Acknowledge Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) in Australian law.
- Dedicated Australian Government funding to jurisdictions based on percentage of Aboriginal people, through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Partnership (LPP) to support Outcome 16 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- Ensure First Nations people are at the centre of decision making in future amendments to philanthropy conditionsⁱⁱⁱ in Australia.
- Establish the Aboriginal Cultural Centre in WA to promote and nurture art, culture, language and heritage.
- Leverage Australian Government investment in Aboriginal Arts Centres.
- Explore ways to support the WA Aboriginal language sector.

Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story

A key strategic priority in Creative WA is to share stories and celebrate place. This includes supporting the creative, cultural and arts sector to tell and share our unique stories in new and innovative ways, share stories with each other and in global markets and ensuring we have fit-for-purpose spaces for creative activity and presentation.

Finding a place for every story is key to addressing division and polarity in Australian society^{iv}.

Improving the wellbeing of young people is an international priority^v, highlighted in Creative WA by aiming to increase young people's participation and pathways for our creative future. The WA Government's ongoing Arts and Culture Monitor survey showed that in 2024, 93% of Western Australians agreed that it is important for children and young people to have access to arts, cultural and creative activities as part of their education, and 90% Western Australians agreed that it is important for children and young people to have access to arts, cultural and creative activities outside of school^{vi}.

The Job-Ready Graduates policy reforms, implemented from 2021, have substantially increased^{vii} the cost of arts degrees. While this also relates to Pillar 3, it has had significant impact^{viii} on the wellbeing of young people. The research has demonstrated that the reforms have negatively impacted attitudes towards the value of arts, social sciences and humanities degrees in Australia, when, in fact, these qualifications lead to relatively stronger labour market outcomes in the long term^{ix}.

To nurture storytellers now and into the future, arts education requires repositioning from a disincentivised career pathway to again being valued for its intrinsic and critical importance and

by doing so, addressing the decline in arts education enrolments in upper secondary education. The importance of a place for every story is reinforced in the key findings:

- Robust evidence^x indicates a creatively engaged society has positive impacts on social cohesion.
- Improved identity, connection, resilience, strengthened communities, health^{xi} and civic trust together with faith in democracy are outcomes to benefit all^{xii}.
- Creativity impacts innovation^{xiii} and in turn prosperity^{xiv}.
- Identity building through branding strengthens soft diplomacy^{xv}.

Actions:

- Report on the long-term social outcomes emerging from the NCP.
- Explore continuous arts education pre-school to year 12 via a STEM to STEAM^{xvi} approach.
- Recalibration of public music education so that musical flourishing is prioritised^{xvii} for all students.
- Re-evaluation and rebalancing of Job-Ready Graduates policy.
- Re-evaluation and rebalancing of secondary school subject weighting for tertiary entrance.
- Increase arts and culture literacy for all Australians through a coordinated communications strategy and implementation plan to dovetail with THRIVE 2030^{xviii} and Brand Australia^{xix}.

Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist

Central to our creative ecosystem are the people who make up the creative workforce: it is essential that we nurture the artists and creative workforce that form the bedrock of our creative ecosystem.

In 2023, the NCP acknowledged artists as workers for the first time.

In 2024, half of Australia's artists were earning less than \$10,000 per year from their creative work^{xx}. Even when combined with work outside their practise, artists' incomes are still considerably lower than the national average^{xxi}.

While significant work has been undertaken to determine creative skills shortages^{xxii}, issues of attrition and precarity^{xxiii} continue.

As Creative Workplaces, the groundbreaking action of Revive, builds momentum, protective measures could be considered to maintain support for the creative sector, into and beyond the vital Creative Workplaces Framework.

Following the Art of Tax Reform Summit hosted by the New South Wales Government in 2025, where impactful potential actions for the creative sector were discussed, the WA Government is supportive of the next steps required to unlock Australia's creative potential through tax reform, including the following suggested actions:

- Raise the \$40,000 non-commercial loss cap, set in 2000, to a higher threshold.
- Make prize and grant money awarded to individual creatives or artists zero tax or concessional tax.
- Allow artists to deduct the market value of their own donated works to better value their contribution and incentivise further giving.

- Implement Fringe Benefit Tax exemption cap of \$30,000 per employee – a benefit currently available to only some charitable organisations with Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) status.
- Amend Private Ancillary Funds distribution rules to support strong philanthropic giving.
- Australian production tax offsets to include broader range of artistic disciplines, including (but not limited to) writing and publishing, live performance, music publishing and distribution.
- Improve tax education, support and guidance for artists, creative workers and creative businesses through online tools, professional training and in person advice.

Further Actions:

- Expand the Australian Government’s Research and Development Tax Incentive (RDTI) to include research activities within the arts and creative industries.
- Levy on large-scale concerts – modest per ticket levy on arena/stadium concerts with proceeds reinvested in the local live music ecosystem.
- Growing and fully resourcing Creative Workplaces at federal level to ensure equitable service for all Australian creative workers in all jurisdictions.
- Address the specific current and future skills gap priority areas including live event production, screen, galleries, libraries, archives and museums and community arts and cultural development.
- Build the capacity of sector organisations to create more jobs and employ more people on a secure, long-term basis.

Pillar 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure

The WA creative sector continues to face compounding effects on operational costs arising from geographic size and location and requires special attention and consideration in the next NCP. The WA Government will continue to advocate for fair distribution of Australian Government arts allocations based on proportionate need, ensuring equity for metropolitan, regional and remote organisations, and that the flow of creative expression between these areas is not hindered by location.

The current global supply chain challenges impacting fuel costs and the long-term effects of climate change, such as more frequent severe weather events, are resulting in increased risk and costs, particularly for touring.

Actions:

- Recalibrate national funding structures to accommodate increased production, travel and freight costs for jurisdictions proportionate and equitable to geographic size and location.
- Continued national coordination and advocacy for data collection, including jurisdictional data to measure the impact of funding creativity over time and better demonstration of social and economic value.
- Targeted investment for community arts and cultural infrastructure to provide accessible and sustainable spaces to work, exhibit and perform.

Pillar 5: Engaging the Audience

A strategic priority of Creative WA is to increase access and participation for all Western Australians. This includes reducing barriers to creative, cultural and arts participation, including cost, physical and digital.

- It is essential audiences see themselves in Australia’s NCP.
- Audience development should be acknowledged in the NCP as dynamic and ever evolving to keep pace with the needs of the environment it is situated in.
- Together with increased access and participation, the NCP should also be ambitious in aiming to improve arts and creative literacy nationally.
- Harness new research insights when developing audience diversification strategies.

Actions:

- Initiate a national audience development grants program with a specific focus on increasing diversity.
- Develop best practice guidelines informed by Creative Australia and Deakin University’s ‘Leading Change’ Community of Practice^{xxiv} findings, and;
- Resource an Agents of Change^{xxv} model for multiyear framework funded organisations.
- Resource an Australian book voucher^{xxvi} program^{xxvii}.

ⁱ Government of Western Australia, [Creative WA: A 10 year vision to grow and sustain our creative ecosystem](#), 2024

ⁱⁱ Australian Government National Indigenous Australians Agency, [Indigenous Rangers Program](#), accessed 2026

ⁱⁱⁱ Parliament of Australia, [Inquiry into arts and cultural philanthropy](#), 2026

^{iv} The Scanlon-Monash [Index of Social Cohesion report](#), 2024

^v UNESCO – UNICEF – UNYO – WHO [Joint call to strengthen policy and investment for child and youth mental health and well-being](#), 2025

^{vi} Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, [Arts and Culture Monitor Survey Report](#), 2025.

^{vii} Innovative Research Universities, [Impacts of the Job-Ready Graduates policy and options for reform](#), 2026

^{viii} Patfield, Gore and Fray ‘[Problematizing the ‘job-ready graduate’ ideal in Australian higher education: new forms of exclusion in the academy](#)’, 2025

^{ix} Innovative Research Universities, [Impacts of the Job-Ready Graduates policy and options for reform](#), 2026

^x Engh, et al., [WE-making: How arts & culture unite people to work toward community well-being](#). Easton, PA: Metris Arts Consulting, 2021.

^{xi} SEW-ARTS [Arts and Social and Emotional Wellbeing \(SEWB\) Understanding the connection between the Arts and health](#), accessed 2026

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- ^{xii} Sonke et al., [Relationships between arts participation, social cohesion, and wellbeing](#), 2025
- ^{xiii} Natasha Parekh, [Creative Industries And Economic Value: A Review Of Innovation, Impact, And Policy Support](#), 2024
- ^{xiv} Baldini et al., [CREATIVITY AS A STRATEGIC RESOURCE: A JOURNEY THROUGH BUSINESS INNOVATION THEORY AND PRACTICE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMPANY GOVERNANCE](#), 2025
- ^{xv} Cristiane Vanessa Alves de Oliveira, [The Hallyu Wave as a Strategic Soft Power Tool: South Korea's Cultural Diplomacy in the 21st Century](#), 2025
- ^{xvi} Perales and Aróstegui [The STEAM approach: Implementation and educational, social and economic consequences](#), 2024
- ^{xvii} Goopy and MacArthur, [Psychological needs and wellbeing in community music education for young people experiencing challenging life circumstances](#), 2026
- ^{xviii} Australian Trade and Investment Commission, [THRIVE 2030 Action Plan to 2030](#), 2026
- ^{xix} Brand Australia, [website-about](#), 2026
- ^{xx} Freeland, A, Creative Australia's Artists at Work study reveals ongoing economic and gender disparities in Australian arts sector, ABC Arts, 2024, referencing Throsby, D., & Petetskaya, K. Artists as Workers: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia, Department of Economics, Macquarie Business School Macquarie University, May 2024
- ^{xxi} Hannah Story, [New study of Australian artists finds average income from art is only \\$14k](#), ABC Arts, 2025
- ^{xxii} Service and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA), [Creative Workforce Scoping Study](#) 2025
- ^{xxiii} Etham et al., '[Artists as workers'? Re-imagining cultural policy for insecure and precarious artists and cultural workers](#), 2025
- ^{xxiv} Glow H, Kershaw A, Johanson K, Trott A, Margieson T, Taylor M & Enoch, W, [Changing Organisations to Diversify Arts Audiences Summary of Findings from the Community of Practice](#), Creative Australia and Deakin University, 2024
- ^{xxv} [Leading Change: Audience Diversification in the Arts 8-Step organisational change model](#), Deakin University, 2024
- ^{xxvi} Federation of European Publishers, European and International Booksellers Federation, [Book Voucher Concept](#), 2024
- ^{xxvii} European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF), [Industry Insights Culture Vouchers](#), 2023