

National Cultural Policy Submission

1466038

Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I strongly support the five pillars, particularly First Nations First, which recognises and respects the central place of First Nations stories within our arts and culture. In regions like Broken Hill and the Far West, this principle is essential. Our communities are deeply diverse, including an ageing population, new migrant communities, young families, single women, Sufi practitioners, and people working across industries such as the arts, mining and agriculture. This creates a rich and complex cultural landscape—a true meeting place of stories.

The pillar A Place for Every Story is especially relevant in Broken Hill, a heritage-listed outback city with a proud history of unionism and workers' rights. This legacy, combined with the diversity of people who live and work here, reinforces the importance of ensuring all voices are represented and valued. Cultural policy must continue to recognise that regional communities are not homogenous; they are layered, dynamic and evolving.

The Centrality of the Artist is also critical. Artists are not only creators but workers who contribute significantly to cultural identity, social cohesion and economic activity. Broken Hill continues to attract artists from across Australia and internationally, drawn by both its unique outback environment and its vibrant creative community. This exchange enhances the cultural life of the region while also supporting tourism and strengthening Australia's broader cultural identity.

However, there are significant challenges that impact our ability to fully realise these pillars. The cost and accessibility of transport to and from the Far West remains a major barrier. Airfares are prohibitively expensive, and rail services are extremely limited, with only one weekly train connection to Sydney. This restricts opportunities for artists to travel, collaborate, exhibit and maintain sustainable careers. Even when grant funding is secured, a large proportion is absorbed by travel costs, reducing the scope and impact of projects. It also makes it difficult to attract diverse and high-quality artists, musicians and creatives to the region.

The pillars of Strong Institutions and Reaching the Audience are closely connected in regional contexts. Organisations operate across funded, philanthropic and grassroots models to sustain arts and cultural activity, often with limited resources. Greater structural support is needed to address geographic isolation and ensure regional organisations can thrive. Reaching audiences—both locally and beyond—requires investment not only in programming, but also in access, infrastructure and connectivity. Looking ahead, I would like to see the next National Cultural Policy place stronger emphasis on recognising artists and creatives as essential contributors to community development. This includes valuing and funding the full scope of their work, from exhibitions and performances to workshops, community markets, skills development and career pathways. In regional areas especially, artists often take on multiple roles—as educators, facilitators and cultural leaders—and this contribution must be properly acknowledged and resourced.