

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I welcome the development of a new National Cultural Policy and support the Government's recognition that culture is not a luxury, but a core part of Australia's economy, identity and social fabric. The consultation paper rightly notes that arts and culture contribute materially to national prosperity, employ hundreds of thousands of Australians, and help define how Australia is understood at home and abroad. It also recognises that rising costs, changing audience behaviour and global competition require policy settings that are resilient, effective and forward-looking.

In that context, I believe the new National Cultural Policy should include a targeted tax incentive to stimulate private investment in Australian screen production, particularly independently produced feature films and other culturally significant local projects.

Australia has developed a reasonably strong framework of producer-side support through agencies, offsets and direct funding programs. What remains weak is the investor side of the equation. Too many viable Australian projects with market potential struggle to secure private equity, not because they lack cultural or commercial value, but because the current system does not provide sufficient incentive for private capital to participate in early-stage screen finance.

If the Government wants to strengthen the commercial sector, support artists as workers, build resilient cultural infrastructure and ensure Australian stories continue to connect with audiences, then it should address this structural gap directly. The consultation paper explicitly highlights the importance of supporting the commercial sector, recognising artists across the broader economy, using investment and systems more effectively for long-term sustainability, and improving how Australian creativity is discovered and distributed. A private-investment tax incentive would advance all of those goals.

I am not advocating for a return to the excesses of earlier tax-shelter models. Any new measure should be tightly designed, capped, transparent and subject to anti-avoidance safeguards. It could begin as a pilot program limited to certified Australian screen projects, with clear cultural tests, fiscal caps, reporting obligations, and rules requiring genuine private capital at risk. Properly structured, such a measure would complement the existing Producer Offset rather than replace it.

This reform would have practical benefits. It would unlock new private capital, reduce over-reliance on limited discretionary grants, increase the number of Australian stories that can be financed, create more paid work for writers, directors, producers, cast and crew, and strengthen the long-term sustainability of the local screen sector. It would also help Australian stories reach audiences domestically and internationally, which is one of the consultation paper's central concerns.

My recommendation is that the new National Cultural Policy commit to exploring and developing a targeted private-investment tax incentive for Australian screen production as part of a modern, balanced and growth-oriented cultural policy framework.