

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous [REDACTED]

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am a published/produced writer and musician.

Any cultural policy must put ensuring correct payment of artists first. Our work must be viewed as a legitimate career path, involving a huge investment of time, our own money and the constant challenge of getting a 'foot in the door'. Consequently, there needs to be more consideration of where money for the arts goes with the primary focus on whether it is getting to artists' pockets and whether it is fair pay for work. 'Work' including the journey to the final product such as rewriting, rehearsal, training and upskilling.

Serious consideration must be given to diverting some of the funds from 'arts bodies' or bureaucracy to something akin to a living wage so that artists who have shown a commitment to their work and seeking public engagement with it, can continue with a career and explore the freedom of creation and new expression which draws us to this work in the first place.

The notion of legitimacy of working as a creative artist needs to begin at school. It needs to be nurtured and grown as a notion of true work, not a sideline or hobby with the necessity of a 'real' job. In times of crisis people turn to art in all its forms with little thought to the lives of the many people who may go into producing a book, a film, piece of music, visual artwork. Yes, they may appreciate this from the perspective of the final piece but not from the hours of work behind it. The impetus of any government policy therefore must be to continue to raise the awareness of artists as real people with real jobs and a real necessity to be paid properly.

There must be an emphasis on real life interactions in art - galleries, libraries, physical books, theatre, live music and there should be a defunding of any artificial intelligence which seeks to simply draw and copy from established work. AI in this perspective is not creative, it is lazy. There should be more oversight and regulation, for example, of venues that promote themselves as music venues but underpay musicians and do little to promote the acts. The royalty rates for authors are too low, particularly in an industry which is predominantly controlled by four or five major publishers. Healthy competition on an open market is fine, but many artists are the original 'gig' workers who are entitled to fair pay.

Overall, you cannot come to a reconsideration of the arts community through defining it through a fragmented 'cultural' prism. You must also cut away the 'hierarchy' of nomenclature when discussing artists. There are no 'emerging' artists - that is a bureaucratic nonsense to legitimise funding. If you choose to dedicate your life to working on your art, you are an artist, pure and simple.

You need to start from the premise that, whether you are first nations artist, an older artist, an artist with a disability, a rainbow artist, the difference may be in the artwork created (the joy of art) but the drive and impetus is the same. It is what compels us, sets our sense of place, challenges us and allows us to challenge. Art is the only thing which has, time after time, significantly changed the course of societal values, norms and history itself. So, in terms of cultural policy? Make the artist the centre of it all and understand that, supporting the artist who consistently pursues the challenge of making their work public, at a grass roots level (by ensuring proper pay standards) is crucial to that notion.