

As a practicing artist and an arts advisor to Council (Mornington Peninsula) as well as an assessor for grants (Yarra Council) I know only too well the issues facing artists, and there are many.

The following points refer to all 5 Pillars as noted in the **Contribution to TOWARDS A NEW NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY**, Public Consultation Paper, March 2026

Point 1: What is needed is a societal understanding that art is not a ‘nice to have’, artists are not working ‘losers’ and that art is incredibly useful to social conversation, scientific representation, entertainment stimulation, cultural development, educational advancement, lateral problem solving and soulful rectitude.

This is quite a big ask to have a population accept an attitudinal shift. STEM (in education terms) is part of the problem – educational institutions of all levels should integrate STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics. It belongs at this level of endeavour.

The unique aspect of creative works is that they can present complex concepts in accessible, instantaneous presentations.

Point 2: Understanding art and its cultural products as an asset not a liability.

I would like to quote the recently published document by the UK Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose: “The Public Value of Arts and Culture – Investing in Arts and Culture to Reimagine Economic Growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, by Mariana Mazzucato, Discussion paper September 2025. There are many relevant findings.

*The creative and cultural industries contribute to the economy through employment, education and local multiplier effects. As a sector, they are globally significant, accounting for 3.1% of GDP and 6.2% of employment (UNESCO, 2022). Investment in cultural industries has a higher multiplier effect than many industries. In the decade prior to the pandemic, employment growth in cultural and creative sectors outpaced overall employment in most OECD countries (13.4% vs 9.1%; OECD, 2022).*

*In England, every £1 generated by arts and culture catalyses an additional £1.23 in economy-wide impact, creating jobs and supporting supply chains across tourism, education and retail (Centre for Economics and Business Research, 2020). \**

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*Arts and culture are not peripheral to economic development but essential to both stimulating and directing economic growth toward more creative, inclusive and sustainable societies and generating high economic multipliers and dynamic spillovers across the economy and society.*

*This stems in part from the collaborative nature of creative processes that engage a range of professions as well as the social value that cultural engagement creates for individuals and communities. Despite these well-documented benefits, arts and culture remain undervalued by conventional evaluation methods, often reduced to their contribution to GDP rather than their ability to shape an economy. As a result, cultural funding is frequently the first to be cut*

*during austerity – precisely when society most needs a renewed sense of purpose and imagination.*

Granting money to arts and artistic activities is an investment – and the amount of money requested at any funding round, anywhere is about 800% more than is available, it is heartbreaking saying ‘no’ constantly to fantastic ideas – there are SO many from artists. Ideas that engage, involve, express, provide solutions, create communities, enhance well-being etc etc

Point 3: Do NOT make ‘humanities’ subjects harder to pay for. I refer to a letter I wrote to the Honourable Tony Burke 19th Aug 2024

What prompted me to write was the article in 'The Age' that day, 'Thirty-nine students got perfect ATARs. These are the subjects they chose!' By Alex Crowe,

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/thirty-nine-students-got-perfect-atars-these-are-the-subjects-they-chose-20240815-p5k2la.html>

regarding the courses subscribed to by the highest ATAR scorers. Many of the highest scoring kids chose humanities and many, many thousands have selected art and creative industries.

Previously I had been also in receipt of the Creative Australia study, [Artists as Workers: A summary and response by Creative Australia](#) that your Government so wisely undertook.

There are 2 stand out items, to me, within this study.

One, the % of creative workers who have completed tertiary education, such a greater % than the general public, and two, the wage disparity for such work therefore your summation that creative workers are the biggest single philanthropic sector of contribution to Australia's cultural fabric. This discipline should be remunerated not rely on arts workers' philanthropy/

Creative practices and industries are what makes a nation more tolerant, more complex, more educated, more empathetic, more lateral in thinking, and dare I say less racist. The Arts and Humanities, as educational pursuit, may not be because someone wishes to stand at an easel and paint (undoubtedly a low money making endeavour) but it is because they want to understand the world, understand humanity, learn historic implication to behaviour, weave culture into their continued pursuits, become educated in the way societies work, and don't work, enrich human knowledge... why else would they be called the 'humanities'!

Making such courses double the price of others, thereby discouraging take up, is the most short-sighted decision to a better Australia I can think of.

Thank you for the invitation to contribute.

Jo Lane

