

National Cultural Policy Submission

Name: Geoff Harrison

Submitting: As an artist

What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you?

A Place for Every Story

There needs to be a recognition of the link between involvement in the arts and good mental health. The arts provide an opportunity for people to deal with personal issues, and the exploration of those issues may be relevant to others.

The Centrality of the Artist

Financial assistance by way of grants is required for artists who are struggling to make ends meet. HECS fees must be reduced, brains are not the sole property of the wealthy. Exhibiting in commercial galleries can be prohibitively expensive.

Strong Institutions

Degradation of the importance of the arts in tertiary institutions must end. I was able to study my arts degree at RMIT in the 1990's part time as I was working back then. Not long after I graduated, RMIT abandoned the part time program.

Increase funding to major galleries to allow them to bring more major exhibitions into this country.

Reaching the Audience

Increase in funding to the ABC and SBS is required so that these organisations can provide an avenue for emerging artists, both performing and visual to reach a wider audience. The dearth of arts coverage on these networks is a disgrace, especially when I think back to earlier days.

Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why.

A Place for Every Story

The arts provide me with the ability to explore issues in my life that have shaped it. In other words, an opportunity for self-expression. It can be very therapeutic, not only for the artist but also for the visitor to a gallery who is dealing with similar issues.

The Centrality of the Artist

Studying art at tertiary level opened my eyes to artforms outside the mainstream, such as installation art, video and performance art. It also gave me an appreciation of art history and its relevance to the art of today.

Strong Institutions

Visiting a gallery is one of life's pleasures for me. It provides stimulation and a sense of belonging in a world that can be a lonely place for an artist.

Reaching the Audience

Everyone craves recognition. But exhibiting at a commercial gallery can be very expensive. Mentorships are required to assist artists in navigating the art market, both digital and physical.

Are there any other things that you would like to see in a National Cultural Policy?

A dedicated arts portfolio, rather than having it bundled in with several others.