

19 August 2022

The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Minister for the Arts
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Emailed to: culturalpolicy@arts.gov.au

National Cultural Policy

The Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the initial consultation stage in the development of the National Cultural Policy.

Recommendation 1: Acknowledging the role of school education in fostering national culture and cultural industries

Documentation and ministerial media statements so far released by the Government indicate that the National Cultural Policy and its development are to have a strong focus on the arts and creative industries and the institutions which support them. Within the framework of the 'five pillars' that are to form the basis of the National Cultural Policy, we urge the Government and its Policy Review Panels to consider schools as institutions that contribute to Australia's cultural vitality.

Schools play an important role in imparting our national culture to students, in developing the cultural awareness and appreciation of young Australians, in helping to foster and develop their artistic and creative skills, and in equipping young Australians to participate in and contribute to the evolution of our national culture.

The Australian Curriculum formally encapsulates the cultural heritage that we bequeath our children and young people, as well as ensuring schools not only foster our future artists but our future audiences, consumers and patrons of the arts. As described in the [Australian Curriculum](#), students are both *makers* of and *responders* to art.

The fundamental role of schools in supporting artistic and cultural endeavour in Australia is recognised in [Creative Australia](#), the Gillard Government's national cultural policy, which is to be the starting point for the Government's National Cultural Policy:

The growth and stability of the cultural economy depends on a strong continuum: beginning with an arts education for all in schools through the Australian Curriculum: The Arts. (Page 15)

Creative Australia also describes at length the importance of ‘a universal arts education for lifelong learning and to drive creativity and innovation’ (pages 61-64).

Digital technologies and access to social media and streaming services are offering young Australians performance platforms and access to international audiences while they are still at school. Schools are both stimulating student interest and meeting students’ demand for creative expression and skills development through the introduction of sophisticated design technology, designated video and sound studios, maker spaces and integrated STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) projects, laying the foundations of students’ creative careers across a range of industries.

The role of schools in helping to foster artists and support arts industries and institutions in Australia is also discussed as part of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communication and the Arts Inquiry into Australia’s Creative and Cultural Industries and Institutions. The Committee’s report, [Sculpting a National Cultural Plan: Igniting a post-COVID economy for the arts](#), which was tabled in October 2021, makes a number of references and recommendations to the role of schools.

As an example of how schools have been factored into another national cultural policy initiative, we also draw the Minister’s attention to the integral place of schools in Australia’s [National Sports Plan](#).

Recommendation 2: Creating an opportunity for further community response

We note that [the Minister has stated](#) that he ‘will deliver a new National Cultural Policy before the end of the year’. We hope there will be time for all those engaged in contributing to Australia’s cultural activities – as makers, educators or consumers – to consider and respond to the recommendations of the Policy Review Panels and to comment on a draft National Cultural Policy.

Yours faithfully,

(Ms) Beth Blackwood

AHISA Chief Executive Officer

AHISA Ltd is a professional association for Heads of independent schools. Our 450 members lead schools that collectively account for some 450,000 students, representing 70 per cent of independent sector enrolments and over 11 per cent of total Australian school enrolments. Some 20 per cent of Australia’s total Year 12 students are educated in AHISA members’ schools.

AHISA’s members lead a collective workforce of over 45,000 teaching staff and some 28,700 support staff.