

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation, as an individual

What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you? Feel free to respond to any or all pillars:

First Nations

Currently in many arts organisation First Nations peoples are doing emotional and cultural labour that is beyond the remit of their employment contracts and roles. It is vital that First Nations peoples are central part of Australia's arts and cultural sectors and creative industries, how this is done requires cultural protocols and sensitivities to avoid unperceived micro aggressions.

This includes embedded First Nations peoples and voices in all aspects of planning, consultation and development of organisations and Boards.

It is vital that there is regular check points via cultural awareness and sensitivity training (annually) for organisations and Boards. This includes understanding of practice, protocols and access with an understanding of the nuanced Aboriginal cultures across the country and the various subtleties contained within.

Addressing blocks for various communities to access arts and culture and supporting open systems and multiple access points for First Nations audiences, artists, mentoring and development programs where there are choices to how these organisations and programs are accessible.

Representation is vital. Respecting and understanding the work of Aboriginal peoples in organisations ensuring cultural safety.

A Place for Every Story

Incorporating listening and long term thinking into organisational practice and strategy.

Who gets to tell the stories and to contribute to the cultural narrative.

Centre voices beyond the usual.

Make places for all types and styles of practice (including operational practice) and levels of communication.

The Centrality of the Artist

'Support the artist as worker and celebrate their role as the creators of culture', there will need to be bold and bespoke reform to the current one-way-fits-all approach ingrained within the employment and tax systems.

Strong Institutions

Strong institutions require robust financial investment and support from the federal, state and local government, the private sector and partners. Secure financial investment takes pressure off organisations allowing time and space for organisations to breathe, to develop strategy and to work at higher levels of professionalism to support a healthy arts and cultural sector.

Strong institutions also are staffed well to ensure that programs and work can be resourced and supported well contributing to excellence in organisational practice and also the health and well being of organisational community.

Long term thinking and legacy building.

Shared resources within the sector (data bases for example). Many small to medium organisations currently struggle with financial and human resources to prioritise administrative systems.

A welcomed more collaborative approach across the sector with sharing of resources and knowledge.

Safe spaces for all including micro organisations small/medium/large across the sector. Everyone has value and can be heard.

Accept that organisations are dynamic systems and benefit from time and funding to have long term strategy and work. Many Australian arts organisations are at a middle age point in their work and are successful because they are run by highly creative and unique individuals, Boards and teams. Arts organisations are adaptive systems holding wealth of experience. More opportunities for cross-work and collaboration with other arts organisations including through professional development secondments would be beneficial to the sector.

Reaching the Audience

Audiences do indeed need to be 'reached', but should also be 'engaged'.

Audience is an action. Audiences are often participants in programs. Understanding and respecting the time and value and contribution of active audiences in programming.

High level listening to the sector. Informal and formal processes to enable this deeper listening.

Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why. Feel free to respond to any or all that are applicable to you:

First Nations

That organisations have First Nations staff at the core of practice and operations, also this extends to Board representation.

A Place for Every Story

Everyone has a story, by making story telling and listening a core component of practice for individuals, groups and organisations we together create archives of value for our communities.

The Centrality of the Artist

Artists placed in residence at multiple advantage points in organisations, on Boards, in business and the private sector, schools.

Strong Institutions

Strong institutions stem from healthy work environments, with access to the right conditions of work including salary, professional development, networks, working tools and support systems, working hours expectations, rewards, networks and shared values. Respect for people, collaboration and shared ideas and strategy are important, along with realistic expectations to create agency amongst teams and individuals.

Reaching the Audience

Audiences to be active - 'audience' as an action.

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

The arts are more than performing arts. Broad interpretations of what the arts are. Education required within.

Everyone can be creative and access points to programs and arts events can be varied and well articulated.

Community driven practice, what does this look like?

Space and time for organisations to adapt and reinvent when necessary - strategy is part of the creative work of orgs, leading to longer term sustainability and stability in the sector.