

National Cultural Policy Submission

Dr Don Munro, Secretary, NSW Federation of Camera Clubs

Submitted: As an artist
As an individual

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

Strong Institutions

RECOMMENDATION 1: The goal of 'Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector to contribute to national life, community wellbeing and the economy' be revised to 'Strengthen the capacity of Australian communities to produce art, crafts and culture that contributes to local, regional and national life, community wellbeing and the economy.'

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Government (and the final cultural Policy) recognise and adequately fund a program that promotes Cultural Democracy. For more on the concept and practices of cultural democracy, see the Arts Council England publication (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/CulturalDemocracyInPractice.pdf>).

Cultural democracy recognises the importance of the existing *community*-based, not-for-profit arts and culture producing sector where individuals and community organisations create, make and participate in the production of Australia's cultural and intellectual life. This sector is typically made up of non-professional or voluntary artists, crafts-people and organisations (such as local photography associations, community choirs, embroidery guilds, poetry groups, youth theatre groups and so on). The defining characteristic of this sector is that people use art and crafts practices, individually and collectively, to create and make art that meets their own individual needs, contributes to the identity and cohesion of their communities, and often is source of innovation, new stories, new techniques, skills development and other cultural assets that contributes to the fabric of Australia's culture.

The existing *community*-based, not-for-profit arts, crafts and culture-producing sector – unlike flagship arts companies or commercial cultural organisations – is distinguished by the principles of (i) direct participation by community individuals and collaborations in the *making* of art and crafts (not the consumption of other's cultural works); (ii) community-based organisation and accountability; and (iii) a commitment to artistic excellence measured in terms of relevance, authenticity and cultural and community development (rather than a concept of artistic excellence that is measured in terms of commercial sales, industry-endorsement and professional acclaim). This sector acknowledges the vital role of 'grass-roots' culture production and expression; citizen participation in the development of their local and regional Australian stories, ideas and values; and more generally, the need to democratise the production of Australian culture.