

National Cultural Policy Submission Template

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Submitted: 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

First Nations artists and culture needs to be at the centre of our national cultural policy. The oldest living culture should be celebrated and nurtured and its enormous potential for unifying communities recognised. The challenge is building the capacity of First Nations artists and communities to fulfil their potential and so additional funding and resources that focus on First Nations arts and culture is crucial.

A Place for Every Story

A place for every story suggests to me that safe and accessible places and spaces need to be developed and supported to allow for our unique stories to be told. Theatres, galleries, museums and libraries are central to this. As a Librarian I have witnessed public libraries provide safe and accessible places for diverse stories to be told, such as providing story times for LGBTQI+ communities. Their role in this important function needs to be supported at every opportunity.

The Centrality of the Artist

Many artists struggle financially. While a few artists can support themselves solely from their art work, the very nature of the challenging, creative work artists undertake often inhibits commercial success. Most artists have to support themselves through second or third jobs, which reduces the time they have available to work on their creative endeavours. Many artists make the reluctant decision to abandon their creative practice altogether. A Universal Basic Income has been suggested as a possible way of supporting artists financially to allow them to continue to work creatively. I would welcome an inquiry by the Productivity Commission into the viability of a UBI in relation to supporting cultural and creative work.

Strong Institutions

Institutions such as theatres, galleries, museums and performance spaces need to be supported so that artists have opportunities to reach their audiences. My involvement as a board member of Canberra Contemporary Art Space has given me an insight into the importance of institutions that focus on fostering new, challenging and bold artistic practice. Institutions that support younger, diverse and emerging artists must be supported as a priority, if we are to ensure the presence of a cohort of highly skilled and productive artists into the future. The ABC, SBS, the national collecting institutions, museums, community TV and public radio stations all play important roles in cultural life and must also be adequately funded and encouraged to support emerging and diverse artists and voices.

Reaching the Audience

Audiences crave meaningful engagement and experiences that connect them to others. We know that artists can and do provide such rich experiences. But these offerings need to be accessible, which to me, primarily means providing low cost or free activities. Audiences from diverse communities must also have their experiences reflected and validated. This means eliminating physical, cultural, or gendered barriers. Government subsidies from in the form of grants to artists and organisations are critical to ensuring that audiences can engage. The Australia Council plays a vital role in this space, but many other government agencies have a role to play in supporting communities and audiences access creative and cultural activities. Agencies should make details of cultural grants publicly available on their websites and a central portal of available cultural grants be developed and promoted.

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

I agree that First Nations must be at the forefront of our cultural policy. However, I reject the idea of listing the remaining pillars in preferential order; I think they are all equally important in supporting our cultural policy.

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

Like all government policies, the National Cultural Policy needs to be evidence based. If we don't collect accurate information about artists and the arts and cultural sectors, decisions on resource allocation will not be well-informed. To this end, I would like to see the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) funded appropriately to be able to undertake regular surveys of the arts, artists and cultural activities that can be used to gauge their impact on Australian life. The ABS was tasked with collecting data on arts and culture through the expert National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics, but the Centre was abolished in 2014. At the time the [National Association of the Visual Arts](#) (NAVA) called the decision to abolish the Centre as 'damaging to the whole arts industry' and 'of huge concern'. Reviving this function would go a long way towards providing better information to governments and policy makers about the arts and culture in Australia.