

National Cultural Policy Submission

Anonymous

Submitted: On behalf of a for-profit arts business

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

A Place for Every Story

ISSUE – GEOGRAPHIC BLINDNESS OF POLICY.

THE PROBLEM: At a National level, Arts institutions, policy, and programming exhibit a passionate disinterest in the west coast of the Nation. Specifically, WA is absent from National thinking. This is evident in the absence of west coast narratives in national arts publications (e.g., WA coverage is generally absent in major visual Arts publications), institutional policy frameworks (e.g., no west coast acknowledgement in DITRDCA policy frameworks ... not even a west coast 'town hall' event in this policy consultation process), institutional practice (e.g., and as one example of many, WA is generally absent from major exhibitions, surveys or prizes. For instance, no West Australian has ever won the Archibald in its history).

THE ASK: National Arts Policy is requested to address and advocate a balanced geographic coverage in visual arts focus. This may require affirmative geographic action, similar to that which is gradually seeing gender and race become more fairly represented in Arts discourse. Specific policy levers should include:

- Reframing DITRDCA National Arts Policy to clearly acknowledge and support the west coast,
- Linking regional (west coast) coverage as a KPI for National funding applications for institutions, publications and programs.
- Advocating to Federal Government to affirmatively increase support and funding for west coast praxis, and
- Advocating to Federal Government the affirmative focus on west coast arts coverage in National ABC broadcasting and media.

Western Australia to be included and a larger focus in the National conversation.

The Centrality of the Artist

ISSUE – COLLABORATION RATHER THAN SILOS.

THE PROBLEM: From a practitioner's perspective, the centrality of the artist' is leading to the artist as being apart from wider industry and other sectors, rather than the artist being a 'valued collaborator'. Part of this thinking appears to be a legacy of outdated of Arts Training, which typically prepares artists for a 'bubble or silo praxis' within the narrow arts sector. Most artists are unfamiliar with potential collaborators, facilitators and enablers on other sectors such as tourism, property, retail, etc, within which artists can make a significant contribution. As a consequence, while the Arts sector is contracting due to disruption, artists appear unable to navigate their way to new opportunities.

THE RESOLVE: National Arts Policy must advocate for improved training within Arts degrees that introduces artists to wider collaborative opportunities in sectors outside traditional arts, and in partnership with non-arts sectors, such as areas of formulative thought education, (e.g., secondary and tertiary non arts degree teaching), thereby 'placing more levers' in the hands of artists that will benefit them and the national interest in a competitive World.

Strong Institutions

ISSUE – REMOVE BARRIERS TO THE ARTS MARKET.

THE PROBLEM: All Arts institutions have suffered in the last decade. Funding for public and publicly supported institutions and programs has contracted. Even worse, financial barriers have decimated the private sector (Arts Market) which now struggles to support itself, the artists it represents, and artists who rely on a healthier market and audience generally. Specifically, Tax rulings which generally prevented the acquisition of Art for super funds and investment, which in turn led to the failing viability of commercial galleries (-in Perth, approximately 6 commercial galleries failed and closed in the last decade). Consequently, artists have been left without gallery representation, and no longer enjoy access to professional resources/buyers/etc. The alternatives confronting artists of exhibiting through institutional and community galleries delivers poor sales if any, failing to support the artists livelihood, and resulting in greater reliance on funding for support.

THE ASK: That DITRDCA directly, and through its National Arts Policy strongly lobbies Federal Government to remove tax ruling barriers to the acquisition of art. This is a low-cost action in comparison to requests for increased funding and will prevent the further contraction of Arts Markets and audiences. If there is one thing that DITRDCA needs to achieve in the coming period, it's the removal of these tax rulings or face on going funding demand.

Reaching the Audience

ISSUE – ARTS MEDIA COVERAGE HAS CONTRACTED AND FAILS TO REACH AN AUDIENCE

THE PROBLEM: Arts is a 'long tail' sector. With the exception of popular programming, our audience represents perhaps one in a hundred or even one in a thousand people. Social media provides no support for reaching audiences due to its algorithms. Ironically, traditional media manages to reach a sufficiently deep proportion of the public to connect with audience of adequate size (ie, say a reach of 1000,000 for a newspaper compared with an actual reach of 100 for social media, after algorithms have contracted the reach of posts. The reach is of course far greater for electronic media.)

THE ASK: DITRDCA, with the support of the National Arts Policy must advocate to Federal Government to increase its coverage of the Arts, commensurate with its obligation under the ABC Charter. In particular:

- The ABC should introduce regular Arts programming to its daily News and Current Affairs
- The ABC should increase its production of Arts content generally (e.g., utilise one of its channels for substantial Arts content), and
- The ABC should transcend the tyranny of geographic distance by reaching out to arts practitioners via electronic means (e.g., interviews via Zoom)

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

Government needs to address:

- Institutions;
Managed by persons who are not bogged in bureaucracy, commercially minded and have business experience in small to large corporations.
- Funding:
Funding to be viewed as seed capital for improving the visual artists and commercial galleries opportunities to become tax paying entities with self-worth.
- Market and Audience development:

Concerted effort needs to be afforded to exposing the visual arts to private and corporate audiences through marketing nationally and internationally and provide by removing taxation obstacles and other incentives.

Australia is known for its sporting prowess but bankrupt when known for our visual cultural identity and heritage which could contribute to the national income, peace and stability through cultural tourism, business development and soft diplomacy.

- First nations:

Care needs to taken when recognising, respecting and celebrating the centrality of First Nations cultures to the uniqueness of Australian identity ensure it is long term vision and brings the nation together not separates along racial lines. Notice ought to be taken of Senator Jacinta Price's recent speech.