

# National Cultural Policy Submission

**Anonymous**

**Submitted:** As an artist, Higher Degree Research candidate, and arts worker

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

## 1. First Nations

1. Generally – First Nations practice must be honoured as ‘our way of being and doing things – it is and always has been at the core of who we are, how we be and live in this world, and honour all that surrounds and sustains us.’ Aboriginal people were stripped of the right to speak, dance, and celebrate culture – we are still fighting for self-determined, led, informed, and delivered practice.

It is time to change this.

2. In Tasmania specific there is a dearth of funding to support self-determined practice. Tasmania relies heavily on volunteer Aboriginal artists and workers to develop, create and showcase work as well as relying heavily on local non-Indigenous arts organisations to then showcase our work. Whilst this might be somewhat satisfactory on a temporary basis – only because we have no alternatives, we have been advocating for our own self-led, operated space for decades – we implore government agencies to recognise our right to self-determined arts and cultural practice and fund us accordingly.

3. There is an extremely high demand on Aboriginal artists and workers at the risk of burnout. Aboriginal individuals working in government agencies have an extremely high demand on them to undertake Cultural Brokering over and above their own ‘normal’ workload, individuals working in museums and galleries, universities, and agencies are simply not supported in a culturally safe way nor are they given the time to carry out all the extra demands placed upon them that go unrecognised.

4. Funding for Indigenous programming within organisations is never represented in the bottom line as core funding – all Indigenous programs are continually sourced via grants and philanthropy external to organisational budget lines AND, at the obligation of the Aboriginal staff employed to secure those funds which places a very high burden on these staff members. This is simply unsustainable, and it is evidenced through very high turnover. We need ‘inhouse’ strategic and focused funding and budget line items to cover programming and staff as well as strategies for succession planning.

5. Individuals are not supported generally through relevant developmental training programs. Individuals are being recruited into roles they are not adequately qualified for placing them at risk and extraordinary compromise.

6. Tasmanian arts and cultural organisations are demanding more and more Indigenous content, cultural programming, and art. The lack of appropriately qualified individuals on the ground places an inordinately high demand on the small cohort of individuals that can deliver, and this is simply not sustainable. As demand increases so should investment towards developing artists and arts workers so that we can meet this demand in an equitable manner and where we are not continuously placed at risk in personally compromising ways.

## 2. A Place for Every Story

To continue as above.

1. There is no dedicated Aboriginal arts and cultural space and place for Aboriginal practitioners to gather, develop, create, share, critique with each other, co-develop and collaborate, and present our own artforms. Tasmania is the ONLY state or territory without a dedicated self-operated arts and cultural centre despite over a decade of lobbying to local and federal agents for this highly desirable space and place.

2. There is a place for every story in Tasmania and we have incredibly unique and powerful stories that underpin Tasmania’s historical narrative. At present Tasmanian Aboriginal arts and cultural

practitioners require the use of spaces within non-Indigenous arts organisations... whilst this can be generous it is highly problematic.

3. There is a sore lack of infrastructure funding and support to Tasmania's individually run arts spaces – most contemporary arts organisations have inhabited the spaces they operate from for decades without upgrade or refurbishment. ALL organisations have to reapply to funding agents everyone, or three years in order just to continue delivering services to the arts sector.

4. Without strategic funding these art spaces are unable to upgrade their spaces to service the increasingly diverse multi-arts practices as they emerge or meet OH&S, accessibility, and other operating policies – this is not the fault of the organisation. As the arts sector shifts continuously to respond to life worlds and events essential upgrades to spaces and places for delivery must be maintained to accommodate the exciting breadth of works satisfactorily.

Should this investment be available it would provide opportunity for MULTI-ARTS organisational representation – create arts hubs / cultural precincts where the diversity of arts practice can be presented – social spaces for sharing food, conversation, arts critique, and practice... where people can meet, gather, create, and present a diverse range of arts practice....

And this could also house a separate, dedicated Aboriginal arts and cultural space – as a component of diverse arts hubs / cultural precincts.

This is a way to look forward – provide effective investment towards establishing locally informed exciting cultural environments that service, celebrate and support diversity of community.

This requires long term vision – not short-term fixes – it is imperative we shift towards this level of thinking and investment.

### **3. The Centrality of the Artist**

Artists, creators, and makers must have a sense of self-determined, respected and celebrated practice.

At present artist/maker is just surviving and always having to spend part of their valuable 'making and creating' time seeking grants and funding towards doing what they do.

Without the artist / maker our consuming public are left without the rich diversity of entertainment, celebrations, festivals, movies, music, and beauty that they not only enjoy but DEMAND...

If we do not invest in our artists then the rest of the world is starved of the brighter, lighter moments in their lives.

### **4. Strong Institutions**

My response to this is closely linked to (2) A place for every story.

We need to become intersected, interconnected, and inter-operational...

Let's work together to share resources, talent, ideas, and collaborate in a way that is fair and equitable...

Let's consider what DYNAMIC art can be when ego is put to the side, we work together and create new visions, experiences, and understandings of what it is to be a diverse and celebratory community.

Institutions must come together – Universities, arts agencies, museums and galleries, private galleries, business, local councils, manufacturers, schools, and philanthropic agents to share and collaborate better.

Let's all begin to share and create together in a new way that recognises our unique assets, knowledges, skills, talent, spaces, places, and visions to a common purpose that celebrates the whole.

### **5. Reaching the Audience**

Audiences must be expanded, and we must look at access programs to ensure ALL parts of our community are provided opportunity to experience the arts and cultural offerings.

At present a high proportion of artistic and cultural events are ticketed – that's okay but let's build in programs where there are targeted audience developmental programs where lower socio-economic groups, culturally diverse groups, or low-mobility groups have equal opportunity and access to the richness of our arts and cultural offerings.

Digital access is imperative for remote and regional audiences...

GOOD and RELIABLE internet connectivity so that our remote and regional communities can access, view, participate, and contribute to our arts and cultural sector. This is essential.

We must also ensure remote and regional Australia has opportunity to showcase their own world experiences through arts events – arts activities and events that are driven from WITHIN the community – community-outwards-arts as opposed to those 'externally imposed' programs that simply do not work and do not bring economic, social, and cultural value to the community.

Investing in community driven arts and cultural practice, events, and ideas is investing in community individual and collective pride, health and wellbeing, learning and education, and providing community economic return.

### **Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why.**

#### **1. First Nations**

I am a Tasmanian Aboriginal artist, arts worker, and research scholar 100% committed to the development of local Aboriginal arts practice and practitioners.

Tasmanian Aboriginal artists must be provided opportunity to tell their own stories, their own way, from their own spaces. For too long we have fallen behind in the national distribution of funding allocation for Indigenous arts.

Tasmania has a unique history, and it is time Aboriginal Tasmanians were given their voice to share their stories through their arts and cultural practice - their way!

#### **2. A Place for Every Story**

I am a Tasmanian – a Tasmanian Aboriginal artist, arts worker, scholar.

Tasmania is a shared complex and rich place with diversity and unique stories.

For too long we play second fiddle to the big island yet our artists, designers, practitioners are highly sought after and celebrated.

We need the infrastructure to BRING our audiences to OUR place... not to always take our art to external audiences.

We have the place – our island, we have the people – our makers and storytellers, we have the stories – our histories and futures.

We need the cultural spaces within our place to present these stories and events.

#### **3. The Centrality of the Artist**

I have answered this above.

Except to say that nearly every artist I know provides over and above in pro-bono, volunteer and in-kind work, advice, mentoring and delivery but this is never acknowledged nor recognised outside of the sector.

Let's value this better – mainstream audiences, buyers, and consumers seem to think that art is too high priced – it is not... it is not... there are always free public events to balance out any investments one might make. Artists are the first to step up when funds for natural disasters affect our

communities – we are the first to respond to local fundraising events and activities. Always the giver. We care, we contribute, and we really do struggle. Respect our artists and invest in them as they so deserve.

#### **4. Strong Institutions**

As above... but let's get savvy on this.

How can we share and build on resources?

Let's put a stop to the competitive nature of pitting arts organisations against each other.

Let's stop doubling up and get smart.

Let's work together smarter, better, and equitably.

#### **5. Reaching the Audience**

Get the rest right and we reach higher audience automatically.

Digital investment is also an imperative component of this – we need adequate investment in digital reach remote and regionally.

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

Respect and Regard... appreciation, value, and care.

Whole of Government, Public and business agency, and organisational attitude must shift from this 'top down' sense that the arts and cultural sector are non-contributors to the national economic measure. This attitude must shift but it must be from the top down.

The arts and cultural sector and all of us working within bring to our broad community an unrecognised value to our communities.

The government will only shift the lack of public and business awareness by placing the deserved recognition, value and regard for our sector.

Acknowledging the value we bring broadly, promoting the economic contribution, and celebrating our arts and cultural contribution to our national identity globally – this is what we need from the government – top down... into, and through business and agencies... and onwards.