

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## Contemporary Asian Australian Performance

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

**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**

As a company based on the unceded lands of the Gadigal peoples, Contemporary Asian Australian Performance (CAAP) supports the positioning of First Nations First in all aspects of the National Cultural Policy.

### **A Place for Every Story**

As the only professional arts company dedicated to making exceptional contemporary Asian Australian work for all audiences, CAAP has played a leadership role in incrementally building platforms that result in artists and productions that reflect the diversity of Australia on our main stages and in major festivals.

The impact of our work clearly demonstrates strong demand from audiences to experience diverse stories in both cities and regional centres.

The National Cultural Policy should clearly articulate the goal of a highly valued and vibrant arts sector that reflects the Australian population – all our stories, at every level.

### **The Centrality of the Artist**

The arts sector needs consistent long term investment across many years, not election cycles, and recognition that, as it is in other industries, investment in research and experimentation is critically important.

Arts education should be embedded in our national curriculum, to nurture and grow generations of artists and audiences.

### **Strong Institutions**

Artist collectives and small to medium arts companies create some of the most innovative and adventurous work on a shoestring budget.

Investment needs to be spread across the entire arts ecology, not only major institutions.

Major organisations should have inbuilt KPIs around collaborations with emerging artists and small to medium companies.

Additionally, creative spaces for development and experimentation are becoming increasingly rare. The policy could address this shortage by providing incentives for commercial developments to allocate a percentage to creative space, similar to the current Victorian Government requirement for % of site value to be given to create open space when blocks are subdivided.

### **Reaching the Audience**

We have also seen strong demand from audiences to experience diverse stories in both cities and regional centres.

The National Cultural Policy should articulate the relevance and value of the arts to each and every Australian, encouraging arts participation and attendance.

The National Cultural Policy should also clearly link the benefits of the arts to education, health and wellbeing, and foreign affairs and trade in ensuring whole of Government buy-in.

**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**

CAAP's work is underpinned by a commitment to engage in critical conversations about intercultural practice, the challenges and the opportunities. We have an important role to play in fostering and contributing to the much needed dialogue and exchange between First Nations and Asian Australian cultural practitioners.

### **A Place for Every Story**

CAAP's mission is to provide a voice for the contemporary Asian Australian experience through live performing arts. In this way creating 'a place for every story' is central to what we aim to achieve. Our vision is to inspire artists and audiences to demand, embrace and realise the full potential of a richly diverse and inclusive multicultural Australia.

### **The Centrality of the Artist**

CAAP has been an agent for change in a sector where Asian Australian artists are seriously under-represented. We have created career pathways for Asian-Australian creators and artists and our collaborations with major State theatre companies and major festivals has significantly shifted the dial in seeing Asian Australian artists and stories on the main stage.

### **Strong Institutions**

Please stop fiddling around with arts funding – the small to medium sector needs surety of time and support to focus on what we do best.

It is exhausting for artists, arts workers and arts Boards to always feel like we could be one grant round away from extinction with all the rich history and knowledge potentially lost.

Small and medium sector arts companies are demonstrably at the forefront of cultural and artistic innovation, and need to be recognised and rewarded as such.

### **Reaching the Audience**

Audience development is more than just more or better marketing. Culturally diverse audiences are often hard to reach because they may not be familiar with the arts landscape in Australia. Engaging with them more proactively and in culturally sensitive ways should be a key priority, for which dedicated resources should be provided.

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

'Diversity' has been a buzzword in the cultural sector in recent times, but much remains to be done to ensure that representing Australia's complex and evolving diversity is more than a box-ticking exercise. Organisations such as CAAP, which centrally focus on bringing diverse experiences to life through high quality and engaging ways, can provide a model for a cultural policy in which diversity is valued as a vital and essential component of Australian culture.