

National Cultural Policy Submission

Anonymous

Submitted: as an individual

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

First Nations

Recognising and celebrating the arts and culture of First Nations people.

A Place for Every Story

Acknowledging and celebrating Australia's cultural diversity.

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

I would like to see a recognition of the important work of arts educators in the National Cultural Policy. As a visual arts educator of more than 30 years I have spent my working life striving to create engaging and meaningful arts learning experiences for my students. I have an understanding of how a rich arts education can benefit students' emotional well-being and sense of self, as well as leading to a deep appreciation of the value of the arts in the lives of individuals and communities. I am fortunate to have seen my students find fulfilling careers in the Arts, and to meet them years later reflecting on how their arts education inspired them in finding their path in life. A depth arts education contributes to creating a society where individuals engage in the creative life of their community; as audiences, participants and champions.

While my comments refer to visual arts education in South Australia there may be parallels with other arts learning areas. There is some excellent work being undertaken in delivering the Arts within the Australian Curriculum, however, the arts learning experiences of Australian students are variable. In primary school settings there may not be a visual arts specialist and arts experiences may be limited in a crowded curriculum with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Generalist primary teaching students may only experience a few hours of arts education in their university programs.

In high schools some students might only have a term of Visual Arts in Year 7 or 8. With such a brief engagement, students have limited opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of contemporary and historical visual arts in an Australian context.

A rich arts education is a vital foundation for a vibrant cultural life. This could be further supported through a range of initiatives including:

- In-depth professional development for teachers...funded Graduate diploma or Masters programs which support teachers to develop their arts knowledge and teaching programs which reflect the intentions of the National Cultural Policy.
- Arts industry placements for educators as well as valuing and including educators in arts industry forums and programs.
- Increasing the number of education officers in cultural institutions such as galleries and museums.
- Funding for visual arts education professional associations. This would enable state and national associations to develop and conduct research and professional learning opportunities for educators. Eg, seminars, conferences, online meetings. The majority of this work is currently undertaken by volunteers.
- Funded research for visual arts education to establish a clearer picture of the current state of arts education in Australian schools and directions for the future.

- Funding for more media content which celebrates Australian culture. Eg programs such as *Great Southern Landscapes* (currently on ABC) are a wonderful resource for educators. Many more resources which document and celebrate Australia's diverse culture are needed.
- Establishing an arts education 'clearing house' so that educators can readily access relevant resources rather than research across multiple institutions and sites
- Promotion of the value of arts education through a variety of campaigns which highlight the achievements of Australian artists and the value of culture. (eg considerable funding has gone into promoting STEM in recent times)

While such initiatives would value and support the work of arts educators they would also contribute to the promotion of Australian artists and culture.