

# National Cultural Policy Submission

Anonymous

## *Background*

I have prepared this submission as a writer, mostly of non-fiction in history, biography and landscape.

## *The Policy Pillars: Challenges and Opportunities*

### **First Nations**

A challenge associated with adequately recognizing and respecting First Nations culture, present and future, is showing similar respect and recognition for First Nations cultural *heritage*, much of it managed under inadequate State legislation. First Nations history and heritage, and the history and heritage of early contact, is an important source of inspiration for many indigenous and non-indigenous artists today. Australia's cultural policy should include, or establish clear links to, coordinated national efforts to improve recognition and protection for historical sources and the cultural heritage of First Nation peoples and early contact.

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

A diverse cultural policy for Australia should include adequate recognition of the *geographical and environmental* diversity of the nation – the distinctive places and environments that help to shape and inspire different artists and their creative works. It should ensure adequate support to artists and communities across diverse regions, remote places and in each State, and avoid promoting an homogenized Australian national identity or culture. The policy should also provide some form of recognition and support for the artists and designers whose creative works help to *shape those diverse environments* today - including architects, landscape architects, urban designers, environmental artists, and land managers. This will help to encourage creative and design excellence in these fields and the places we live.

An associated further challenge for the cultural policy is to foster similar respect and recognition for Australia's diverse cultural landscape *heritage* – the historic and sometimes beautiful 'constructed' places that we take for granted today. Much of Australia's landscape heritage is managed under inadequate State legislation that contains little or no protection for cultural landscapes. Australia's cultural policy should include or establish clear links to coordinated national efforts to improve recognition and protection of Australia's cultural landscape heritage, both First Nations and non-indigenous.

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

Australia's cultural policy should recognize and provide some form of support for non-fiction writers including historians, as well as architects, landscape architects, urban designers and environmental artists. One challenge for the policy is to recognize the practical importance that the university sector plays in helping to provide financial support for many of the creators in these fields, and in others such as visual arts – and either addressing, or linking to policy that addresses, the casualisation, exploitation and wage theft that has been taking place in this multi-billion dollar, multi-national sector of Australia's economy and society. Improving wages and conditions in the university sector will help to provide necessary additional support to many artists as workers.

### **Strong Institutions**

To support creative endeavour, community well-being and the economy, Australia's cultural policy should provide adequate support for national historic and heritage institutions that professional and amateur writers depend upon, such as the National Archives, National Library, and National

Museum, etc. The Federal government should also work with States to ensure adequate support for the nation's State Archives, State and local Libraries, and State and regional/local museums etc, and community historical societies. A further challenge that Australia's cultural policy should address is strengthening the Commonwealth and State institutions responsible for identifying and protecting our First Nations and non-indigenous heritage.

Our universities should also be recognized an important cultural institutions that support national creative endeavour. A challenge for the national cultural policy is linking or aligning with reforms in the higher education sector that should refocus universities on their role in shaping Australian society and culture, rather than just the economy, and adequately supporting their creators rather than their administrators.

***Other matters***

As a participant in a range of community-based cultural activities, I would urge the Government to provide adequate support to community arts as a direct means of contributing to national wellbeing, building social and cultural capital, and fostering creativity in Australia from the bottom-up.

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