

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Submitted: as an artist, an individual and a for profit arts business (providing mentoring and business and copyright educational services to artists).

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

Teaching about and for our Indigenous culture:

More indigenous history, culture and protocols taught in schools. Strong protection for Indigenous art, including protection against copyright infringement and fakes. Upskilling indigenous artists to run successful businesses. A dedicated Indigenous art gallery, initially one in Sydney or Canberra, but eventually every State and Territory.

A Place for Every Story

Access to culture throughout learning:

Clear pathways from Primary and Secondary school to allow an experience of arts and culture from a young age. Students should be given experience in both consuming and understanding great art and the history of art, and taught art (music, drawing, acting, writing, dance, etc). First Nations and diverse Australian created arts and culture should feature prominently. Diverse cultural experiences should also be part of the curriculum, aligned to study, including visits to art galleries, plays, movies, music events, etc.

There could also be a scheme to give children vouchers, particularly from disadvantaged families and those with disabilities, to access arts and cultural experiences, like successful sports vouchers programs.

It will assist with both developing skills and talents, but also help with an understanding that the Arts is a valid and rewarding career choice and is good for health and mental wellbeing. This will assist artists with the confidence and self-belief often lacking in those who choose to work in the arts.

Access should continue in community centres, hospitals, and to the retired and elderly, allowing them to experience arts and culture as both hobby and profession. Artist in Residence programs using professional and emerging professional artists could be embedded into schools, universities, community centres and old people's homes. For students and aspiring artists, it will provide hands on experiences with a professional and will showcase arts as a profession – 'you can't be what you can't see'. It will also provide access to arts as a hobby for others in the community and encourage all Australians to try different art forms. The program will also give a well needed financial boost to the participating artists.

Higher costs of arts and cultural university fees should be reversed.

Portfolio careers:

Acknowledgement of the fact that the arts can be a portfolio career, with people undertaking different roles on any given day, and, if a freelancer, working for many different businesses.

As a former Skills Development Officer for QLD's Creative Industries Skills Council, we were working on a Portfolio Career qualification that never saw the light of day due to changes in State Government priorities. The Course is very needed and would be situated in the Vocational system. It would consist of a flexible course which would allow participants to choose units of training suited to their individual needs. For example, a training program for a visual artist may include art techniques, marketing, business planning, risk management, event management, hospitality, and training units of competency. As well as improving techniques in their chosen mediums, it will cover the need to plan and market their business and manage and implement exhibition openings including planning for risk and catering.

The Centrality of the Artist

Skills and knowledge development:

Since the axing or watering down of external skills development bodies (Skills Councils) there have been issues with loss of skills, for example such as qualified sewing machine mechanics (essential for the fashion industry), and the ongoing development of new skills and knowledge in the creative sector. Often those working on the coalface in the creative industries and arts find it difficult to talk frankly to Government representatives. Australia needs a Skills Development body for the creative sector, funded by Government and perhaps also global business that benefit from a healthy creative sector (i.e. Apple). It should be autonomous, but report to Government, advising on skills shortages, crucial skills gaps where remediation needs to be implemented quickly, advise on new training needs and the need for traineeships and apprenticeships to preserve essential skills and knowledge and pass on skills to new generations.

Having a champion voice for arts skills development could lead to stronger training programs and the provision of traineeships and apprenticeships in key areas. In conjunction with a program of life long access to the arts, this role will also help with advising and implementing better linkages and skills pathways between Primary, Secondary and Tertiary training in the arts.

Grant funding:

I would like to see some changes in the mechanisms of grants funding, streamlining to make the process easier on all, especially those with disabilities, technical challenges, or English language challenges.

All funding bodies to be supported to look at their application processes through the eyes of a user and changing to better support applicants. Many have great challenges understanding and using the technology. For example, the current Australia Council portal, where budget items, timeline activities and other items need to be entered line by line. It is an extremely stressful and time-consuming process, is ill thought out and not necessary. Ideally there needs to be a streamlined, across-the-board framework where all Council, State and Federal funding bodies use the same application technology, method of imputing timelines, budgets. It will allow familiarisation and consistency. Applicants should be able to input contact, ABN and other regularly required data once and it is saved for all State and Federal grants.

More specific feedback from funding bodies. It would be useful for the learning of applicants to have a better feedback system in place for when applications are not successful. Australia Council to have State representatives, to assist with this, and other engagement with the arts community around grant funding.

Copyright:

Including copyright and IP knowledge in arts training, in particular, through creative Vocational courses. At present only the CUA Music courses have Copyright as a core (mandatory) unit. It should be a core in all arts and creative courses to teach artists their rights and responsibilities and the value of their creative work. There is much misunderstanding around copyright and artists rights, particularly around use on social media. Training in this area will be very valuable. Continued funding needs to go to the Australian Copyright Council and funding to Arts Law Centre of Australia to assist artists navigate through infringements.

Fixing CUA Music courses

The Vocational CUA Music training package needs to be fixed. Previously there was three streams (Music, Business and Technical Production) under different codes. For example, CUS30109 Certificate III in Music, CUS30309 Certificate III in Music Business, CUS30209 Certificate III in Technical Production. Now in each qualification area, the streams fall under one code, with the specialisation in brackets. This has resulted in graduates of Music qualifications not able to return to study to complete music Business and/or Technical Production at the same level. Musicians are not gaining the important skills and knowledge they require to successfully run their business. It has created big gaps in skills and knowledge in the industry. For example, in QLD, there is now no providers running Music Business VET courses, which also leaves non-musicians desiring to work in the industry without an avenue for training.

Strong Institutions

A strong Federal arts portfolio:

Development of a Federal arts department to implement and drive policy, investment and understanding of arts and culture. A key role would be to promote the economic, cultural and health benefits of the arts to the Australian public, so all Australians understand it's value and importance as a career choice.

Reaching the Audience

Development of an 'Arts Australia' brand and accompanying marketing campaign to help promote Australian arts and culture to the world. Use it to promote both people visiting Australia to consume cultural experiences, and as a brand to promote the export of Australian arts and culture to the world. This should include an Arts Australia website, promoting and featuring Australian arts and culture.

Training artists in marketing:

Training programs available in tertiary education, through mentorships and councils to train artist in developing their brand, target markets, traditional and social media marketing, including use of technology. Teaching understanding of experiential marketing and fan engagement for our performing artists.

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

As a white artist and arts educator, I have a lot to learn about First Nations arts and culture.

A Place for Every Story

As an educator I believe that the whole community should have access to high quality, reasonable cost arts training and education, including business and marketing education.

The Centrality of the Artist

As an artist, and arts business educator and former Skills Development Officer working with Government, and Industry I have a unique skill set much in demand. Unfortunately, most of the call on my experience and knowledge is in a volunteer capacity, which results in less time to practice my own craft and in extreme burn out. Volunteers in the arts need to be recognised, perhaps with tax breaks.

Strong Institutions

There needs to be arts available in a range of institutions, from schools to community centres to retirement villages.

Government needs to ensure there is an understanding how the arts impacts on each and every portfolio, the whole of the community and life in Australia.

Reaching the Audience

As a practicing artist and arts worker, I struggle to market my businesses and events and create content. Formal marketing assistance and training would be a valuable resource. Perhaps even a voucher system to use other creatives for content development – photographers, videographers, writers.

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

- Solutions for music streaming and low payments
- Solution to ticket scalping, including posts on social media
- Training all businesses about artist copyright and how to avoid infringement
- Increase funding to Australia Council, Screen Australia, the ABC and SBS
- Fostering collaboration between the arts and other non-arts sectors
- Understanding that creativity and innovation is crucial for future workforce development