

# National Cultural Policy Submission

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Submitted: As an artist

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:

## 2. A Place for Every Story

- Absolutely essential that a wide range of demographics are represented in funding
- We must reconsider the redistribution of funding going to major arts organisations that are not adequately representing Australian society and actively working to remove barriers for all audiences
- Western Australia remains under represented in federal funding, and that goes double for regional WA
- A distinct lack of actual spaces for artists to work- where are the venues with affordable hire prices for rehearsal/ development/ presentation? And STORAGE- this is a continued problem for majors, funded orgs and individual artists.
- How are online platforms being supported for the future, beyond current streaming opportunities? How are we future proofing?

## 3. The Centrality of the Artist

- Artists are WORKERS. It's not a lifestyle choice.
- UBI. Imagine spending all the time we spend hustling for grants and side jobs on creating meaningful arts experiences for Australian communities.
- We must invest in artists as well as projects- development and processes as well as product.
- How do we support mid career artists better- we are losing experienced practitioners as the fight to earn above junior income becomes too much. The slashing of service orgs in recent years has meant less support for this vital section of the sector. This could be residencies, fellowships, embedding artists in orgs (why are there so many arts administrators employed in funded orgs, and so few artists?)
- No union that represents all artists- and for some practitioners, there is no union at all (eg theatre directors and producers)
- Institutions claim to be 'for artists' but they are too often not- this is public facing rhetoric that isn't backed up by the stats. Transparency of wages to office staff and artists fees is essential.
- Education institutions closing- support for schools and tertiary is essential

## 4. Strong Institutions

- The connections between levels of the ecology are weak. The "trickle down" from majors does not happen. As part of this, more connection between three levels of government must occur.
- The gutting of OzCo funding to the small to medium sector has been disastrous, preventing targeted support to artists and audiences occurring. This is especially true of WA.
- A rethink of pathways is essential- small to medium is not "lesser".
- Invest in indies! They are the lifeblood of innovation and the sector.
- Proportion of funding to majors, small to medium and individual artists absolutely must be addressed. The old systems are broken. How are we measuring true impact?
- There is an absolute crisis of governance in arts orgs, and this must be addressed. More training in leadership is required.
- Multi year funding is essential for economy of scale

- How are we measuring impact? Are the models of “most audience members” outdated?

## 5. Reaching the Audience

- Depth not breadth- let’s embrace the slow tours. **Relationships** – not pump and dump !
- Being welcoming- our institutions are still by and large fancy places for fancy people. How can work with outreach more- orgs working with metro/ outer metro communities (not just inner city)
- Mixed use buildings- what services can be in our arts buildings that can attract a broader audience reach?
- Let’s reconsider tickets/ sales strategies- further investigation into pay what you can; and also free or very low cost tickets – what would we save on marketing if we were giving more free tickets to target communities?
- We must move beyond the desire for quick fixes in terms of audience development- meaningful connections take time (sometimes longer than a government term). Audiences can become our best advocates. Talk to regional WA arts org Rave About Arts, and ask them about how they made a few farming towns in the middle of nowhere a hub for contemporary dance
- National risk mitigation system- is there a place for underwriting insurance for reaching all our audiences? Tours are fraught amongst a time of climate disruption and Covid.

**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:**

## 3. The Centrality of the Artist

I refer you to the outstanding work from Performing Lines WA team in establishing and running the Kolyang artist labs and hubs over the past few years, as an example of best practice in artist-led programs that value artists over products.

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

As a WA artist/artsworkeer I am concerned at the representation on the Ministers Panel, in particular:

- lack of WA representation
- lack of artists at differing stages of their career and artform

Disaster support- underwriting and planning for risk in uncertain times (environmental, public health)

Considerations of the unique environment of WA: The geographical size with a relatively low-density population is a defining characteristic of the creative industries in the State. The differences between the metropolitan, regional and remote populations is significant and makes the equitable delivery of and access to cultural activity a challenge.

Also the following:

- Actual dedicated department and seat in cabinet
- Using dead spaces/optimising ones we have
- Spaces for indies – ongoing – affordable

- Better evaluation tools and exposure/storytelling impact
- Long term options – not gig to gig
- Invest in development and artists (not outcomes)
- Reporting – reduce it.
- Playing Australia – recognising distance of capitals
- Pathways
  - Education/policy
  - Career development for artists and arts works (see sports)
  - Status and attitude shift
  - Indelible ties to education policy
- Chill out institutions! You are not better than us! (hierarchy of venues)
- Trust in artists
- Hardcore commercial campaign for advocacy
- Reduction of funding and organisations has made an already tough gig very, very hard
- National (not use NSW/VIC/QLD)
- Touring – disparity in states
- Mental health and wellbeing of sector – and recognising to contributions to community our sector makes