

# National Cultural Policy Submission

**Luca Carter**

Submitted: As an artist

Dear Minister Tony Burke and the Cultural Plan Advisory Committees,

My name is Luca, my pronouns are he/they/xe, and I write to tell you about how much being involved in youth arts has positively impacted my life.

Being involved in youth arts has allowed me to not only teach people how to work as a team and create music together, but it's also given me the opportunity as an openly transgender performer to be a role model for other young gender queer and questioning artists and performers around the central coast. Being part of such a warm and accepting company such as Jopuka is a privilege I hold with the highest honour.

The arts and its safe spaces, such as Jopuka, have had a significant positive impact on my own mental health, as well as others'. I know a fair amount of young people who suffer from different mental health diversities, and the positive impact musical theatre in particular has had on these young people is astounding! Watching everyone – people of all ages at that – come out of their shells and really give it their all is so rewarding! I have a fair few friends who have come in to their first rehearsal of their very first show shy as a mouse and shaking like a chihuahua, only for them to open up and blossom into a lightning strike – and their energy and pure joy is contagious! Watching them and learning from them has shaped me into the performer I am today, and performing has also helped me immensely in my battle with depression and PTSD, as it serves as an excellent distraction on bad days, as well as keeping me busy so I can focus my energy in doing something I love. The arts is a safe place for everyone, regardless of their age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, beliefs, ability (and/or disability), and mental health.

I also support the following points being put forward by the youth arts sector;

1. Include "Young People's Engagement with the Arts" as a priority of the National Cultural Plan.
2. Establish an ongoing, dedicated funding stream for Young People's Engagement with the Arts for companies whose core business is young people's engagement, administered by the Australia Council for the Arts.
3. Establish targeted, cross-department streams of funding for Young People's Engagement to work with Health and Mental Health, Employment, Youth Justice, Regional Youth and Education – co-managed by the Australia Council.
4. Establish Advisory Boards that represent the diversity of young Australians, managed independently, as ongoing standing committees for the Australia Council for the Arts and the Minister for the Arts.

Warmest regards,

Luca Carter (he/they/xe)