

# National Cultural Policy Submission

**Amanda Wright**

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organization, as a worker/professional in an industry who uses arts and as an individual.

Dear Minister Burke,

I commend you on making a National Cultural Policy a priority of the Government as one of the very first issues addressed in your role as Minister for the Arts.

My submission comes as an Arts Leader who has worked across three Youth Arts Companies, Shopfront Arts Co-Op, PYT Fairfield and the Australian Theatre for Young People. In my experience across this industry I have seen amazing things achieved for the benefit of young Australians, in all their diversity, by passionate and inspiring artists and arts workers.

I am also a mother to two young children. I am passionate about the future we are creating for them, and all children and young people across the nation.

**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:**

## **A Place for Every Story**

Funding for the Youth Arts sector, has been systematically decreasing. This is despite the vast body of evidence proving the many benefits of engagement in the arts for young people in the areas of wellbeing, mental health, educational outcomes across the curriculum and community engagement.

Covid has had devastating impacts on the lives of young Australians. The impact upon their ability to socialise and connect with not only other young people, but society more broadly, has created vast issues with mental health, education and employment.

Investment and support for the engagement of young people with the arts is critical to ensure there is a place for every story in Australian culture, and that every Australian is given the opportunity to hear them.

## **Strong Institutions**

Arts institutions whose core business is working with young people hold a unique place in the landscape. These institutions champion the rights of young people, including their fundamental right to have access to the arts and self expression. They are employers of artists and arts workers, and contribute to the economy of our nation.

Australia is an international leader in creating work with, by and for young people. Yet without urgent support, many of these key institutions are at risk. The impact of these companies (ATYP, Polyglot, Shopfront, St Martins and Arena Theatre Company, to name but a few) losing their funding has a direct result on the creative development of our nations children and young people.

### **Reaching the Audience**

In order to develop young people as consumers of culture now, and also as the next generation of audiences, strategic and cross-portfolio investment is essential. This is an investment in the long term health of the entire arts sector.

Improving the lives of young people can change a generation of Australians.

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

I support the call from the Youth Arts Sector on the Federal Government to enact four key recommendations within the National Cultural Plan:

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 in the Arts 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.