

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Submitted: **On behalf of an arts peak body**
 On behalf of an organisation with arts-components (e.g. community organisation, tourism, venue, health, education etc)

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

Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) welcomes First Nations as the first pillar of the national Cultural Policy. ATOM believes this can function to provide a connection for all Australians to First Nations cultures and artworks. ATOM believes that this can provide space and resources for First Nations arts practitioners, particularly when we are moving into 21st Century practices. There will be a need to provide resources and opportunities in schools and other educational settings for First Nations students in particular and all student in general to gain learnings of and from First Nations artists. There also needs to be an improved pathway for First Nations art practitioners to work in educational settings in programs such as Artists in Schools.

A Place for Every Story

Storytelling and narrative are a key concept in Arts education. They are what the Arts are about. It is through Arts education in schools that all students gain the opportunity to create and tell their stories, not only for themselves but for audiences both within and beyond the educational setting. This audience may be family, peers or the wider community. There is both a challenge and an opportunity to overcome the "tyranny of distance" and give these opportunities to all Australian students. A continued focus on developing stories from minority and marginalised groups is need as well as a platform to access these stories. There must be an emphasis on local (Australian stories) being produced, preserved and accessible. The continuation of Government funding for local screen content is imperative and we agree with the Make It Australian campaign that Streaming Services should invest 20% of their funds to producing local screen content. In addition Streaming Services should have a 20% quota of local content to ensure Australian stories are accessible.

The Centrality of the Artist

Artist is a broad term which can, and should, include students at all educational levels. Their teachers can, and should, be considered as co-artists/mentors/creative enablers. This position of teacher needs to be considered in any cultural policy. Support needs to be provided in resource creation, professional learning and for programs such as Artist in Schools. These resources and programs empathise the creative potential of all students, place the student as artist and the teacher as enabler. We, as a nation, need to hold to the belief that all students have stories to tell and have artistic potentials that need to be developed/expanded. This means that a comprehensive Arts education covering all five art forms in the Australian Curriculum, Drama, Dance, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts, must also be central to a National Cultural Policy.

Strong Institutions

Strong institutions are an essential pillar to a strong National Cultural Policy. This must include educational institutions such as schools and tertiary and further educational institutions and Arts education professional associations. A strong National Cultural Policy would give support to and for comprehensive curriculum development and resource creation in schools from k-12. The five Arts teacher professional associations are perfectly placed for this.

Reaching the Audience

Students from K-12 and beyond are certainly the future audience but they are also a contemporary one, in addition to being art producers they are also art consumers. They are an audience that needs access to arts and cultural experiences no matter where they live. The role of arts teachers is an underappreciated one as is the role of arts educators' professional associations. These associations act as bridge between creators and audiences, teachers and curricula and students and teachers. A strong National Cultural Policy should provide the opportunity to develop the relationship between all sectors of Arts education, the wider arts community and, in turn, the society itself. A strong National Cultural Policy is a key component in creating and nurturing the critical and creative thinking that a 21st Century education requires. This is an opportunity to reinforce the value of the Arts in education.

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

First nation artists and artwork are central to an understanding of First Nations cultures that all Australians should have. The best and most effective way to achieve this is via education, largely within a formal educational setting and within the Australian Curriculum. Funding is needed to develop resources to support this, funding is also required to support First Nations artists and educators.

A Place for Every Story

ATOM believes this too is a central part of any cultural policy. Geographical obstacles need to be overcome so that every Australian has access to arts and cultural programs, education, performances, artworks and art experiences. Students need to be able to express and tell their own stories and experiences and one of the best ways for this to occur is via the arts and arts education. The role of schools, the curriculum, teachers and arts teacher professional associations is vital in enabling teachers to develop skills and resources that will ensure that all students will have the opportunity to tell their story in the manner they wish.

The Centrality of the Artist

The National Cultural Policy should support programs, organisations and individuals that, in turn, support all Australians as artists in themselves or who wish to experience the Arts. Education is once again the key. However, this should not be hived off or seen as solely the domain of an education

department/ ministry but needs to be embedded in an Arts ministry, Education and others, a “whole of government” approach.

Strong Institutions

Strong Arts programs in educational settings need to be a key part of a living and vital National Cultural Policy. The removal of the university fee increase for Creative Arts courses needs to be attended to promptly. Teacher training in the arts needs to be supported and expanded. All primary teachers should be able to specialise in an Arts subject and be familiar and competent with the curricula of the other four. Funding arts teacher professional associations needs to be a priority as these associations provide the link between teachers, the curriculum and students. These associations also create and provide resources to and for teachers and students.

Reaching the Audience

A strong National Cultural Policy needs to ensure that all Australians have the opportunity to experience and participate in arts cultural programs, events and engage with artworks. A minimum requirement of Australian content on broadcast and streaming television services should be a part of a National Cultural Policy. In addition, there must be a greater minimum requirement than the above of Australian content for children’s television both broadcast and streamed. Organisations that provide for children, students and young people in the arts should be funded to support their work – these provide for young people both as artist and audience.

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

Arts education needs to be embedded in each of the five pillars and added as a sixth pillar. It is via arts education that all Australians at a point in their lives experience and participate in Australian culture and cultural life. Australian students deserve and need to have experience in all five art forms (Dance, Drama, Media, Music and Visual Arts). Arts education has been a neglected area in Arts and Cultural policy and the National Cultural Policy is a welcome opportunity to address this. Arts education is how, at some point in their lives, most Australians engage with the arts and Australian culture and this relationship needs to be nurtured. Arts education gives people the tools to live a rich cultural life and develop the capacity to be cultural ambassadors within their community and Australian cultural life itself.