

National Cultural Policy Submission

Australian Guild Of Screen Composers

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

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

There is still a vast under-representation of First Nation artists within the film music industry. Whilst there is increasing presence of First Nations People being represented on the screen, there is minimal participation behind the camera and in post production. There needs to be more programs to help First Nations people gain experience within the film industry in general and in screen composition in particular.

A Place for Every Story

There needs to be a broad based support to cater for the diversity of the arts. There is recognition and support for established arts such as the Opera and Ballet and this should continue. However there needs to be greater recognition and support to be able to convey stories on a smaller scale - able to foster stories across multiple art forms and cultures , helping emerging artists as well as smaller scale establishments such as independent theatres, cinemas, clubs and even bars to cater for events that promote and celebrate the multi talented artists and multicultural Australian society we live in.

The Centrality of the Artist

As multinational companies are increasingly dominating the platforms that exhibit work, it is imperative that Artists' copyright is protected. This is even more essential if multinational establishments are seeking funding from government bodies. There is continual pressure on artists to hand over their intellectual property to multinational companies. This relates not just to composers, but to writers and directors as well as production companies.

Government must acknowledge that protecting these rights is not only an investment in our culture-ensuring a thriving artistic community, but also has the benefit of being an economic investment that keeps royalty streams within our economy.

Strong Institutions

The doubling of fees to study art based subjects at a tertiary level must be reversed. There has also been a huge increase in private institutions offering extremely expensive courses that arguably offer little value to the students forking out their money and incurring boundless debt.

The fact that Australia celebrates elites in sport, but decries any attempt to foster elites in the arts needs to be addressed openly and honestly. We should be creating scholarships for talented creative artists and musicians to help foster their careers, much in the same way we do for sports at a tertiary level. Perhaps a National Arts and Music Tertiary Centre could be established.

There should be a funding body set up that caters not only for high art like The Australia Council, but can foster emerging commercial artists and festivals that can promote our work internationally.

With regards to arts based funding such as Screen Australia, we should be broadening the funding guidelines to not only address economically viable productions but also criteria to include the possibility of more diverse cultural submissions.

Reaching the Audience

We should be looking not only at the potential domestic audience, but also our international audience. We should fast track the re establishment of the Australia Network that was cut under Tony Abbott's government. This acted as a way to communicate our way of life and our stories abroad. This network could easily be expanded to not only be a news platform, but an arts platform.

In order to tell Australian stories, we need government to provide incentives, not only in the form of grants, but also in the form of mandates for content providers and distributors to make and broadcast our work. Streaming Services must be mandated to make Australian content. Streaming Services must be mandated to reinvest 20% of their locally derived income back into making Australian content.

This not only has the benefit of creating employment and therefore taxes to help finance the economy, but it has the added benefit of making these stories accessible to people across the world as streaming services make this content available to a wider international audience.

There could also be incentives for distributors within Australia to promote Australian work in theatres and cinemas.

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

There is a wealth of knowledge and understanding that is gained when we not only tell stories about First Nations' people and culture, but when we actively engage on a professional level. Education is always a two way street and so fostering ways to help First Nations' artists interact with other practitioners strengthens our national engagement and identity.

A Place for Every Story

So often we take a parochial view of what constitutes an Australian story. There has been a belief that Australian stories must always take place within our shores. This disregards the plain fact that Australians have stories that also take place abroad. It is time that we look at celebrating a more diverse range of stories, not only historically, but also internationally.

The Centrality of the Artist

The government needs to be cognisant of the fact that what constitutes an "Artist" is ever expanding as technology and opportunities advance. There are so many courses that are available to study, but little in the way of helping emerging artists get a foothold within our various industries. There needs to be a broader investigation as to the potential economic benefits of emerging industries such as VR and video gaming where Australia is currently in its infancy yet has huge potential to flourish.

Strong Institutions

The ABC and SBS have been attacked and had huge funding cuts. It is time to reverse this trend and reinvigorate these nationally vital broadcasting institutions.

We must invest in our public educational institutions and lesson the course fees that were increased under the previous government.

Cultural institutions should possibly have guaranteed funding that looks beyond one off grants or funding based on an electoral cycle. It is time to invest on a more long term basis.

Reaching the Audience

We must have a multi pronged approach to reach our audience. A policy should be viewed across the spectrum of live interaction- from the intimate bars to concert arenas, and also determine how we reach audiences in their lounge rooms, both locally and abroad.

The policy must cater for ways to help local small establishments make it less cumbersome to put on arts related events, it should help make larger live productions more economically viable. Is this the case for large commercial operators putting on concerts that generate significant profits for the promoters and artists, but don't generally have a flow-on effect that can be measured, as an artistic benefit?

The policy must also look at ways that international companies such as streaming services be mandated to financially support Australian content that is promoted both here and abroad.

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

Promote gender equality