

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## Anonymous

Submitted: As a worker/professional in an industry who uses arts (e.g. art therapist, tour guide)

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

Opportunities:

- Ensure that First Nations history, stories and living culture are key to our education, artistic representation and international representation.
- Ensure that First Nations education is embedded in schools as well as incidental learning environments (ie libraries)
- First Nations names, words and terms used in everyday life and considered as the first naming option – locations, street names, features etc
- Formally and fully adopt the Uluru statement reforms

Challenges:

- Consideration of the traumatic history and that the recovery and reactivation of this trauma can still be very real.
- Needing to ensure meaningful change – not just rhetoric or symbolic
- Shifting narratives, beliefs and actions of old colonial histories, beliefs and behaviours – including shifting of processes to make for easier engagement and collaboration with/for First Nations cultural practices

## A Place for Every Story

Opportunity:

- To recognise and support artists and arts organisation outside of the cities. In particular the outer suburbs (which can often miss funding and touring opportunities as they sit between metro and regional)
- To highlight the diverse stories of our country from a range of locations (not just city or regional) and from a range of demographics
- Through building of creative ecology in a variety of places, allows for creatives to practice and thrive anywhere – rather than having to move. This in turn could allow for local inspiration and allowing young/up and coming creatives to feel able to pursue a creative career without feeling the need to relocate

- To adjust funding and touring initiatives to encourage greater opportunity in suburban (outer city) areas.

#### Challenges:

- Ensuring adequate resources and funding to support creative expression outside of 'city' or 'regional' contexts

### **The Centrality of the Artist**

#### Opportunities:

- Ensure that arts education is a compulsory part of primary and secondary curriculum. Further, as upper secondary subject selection occurs, ensure that when a science or health stream subject is compulsory, so too is an arts stream subject. This would allow for exposure and experience to all students, as well as indicate the importance of the arts in society and career (rather than an optional 'nice to have')
- Adequate (and better than adequate) funding opportunities to support artists/creatives in the time and space to create and refine their crafts. Such as a type of 'universal wage' to ensure basic living costs are covered (negating the need to split creative time and part time work). Ensuring that this financial support is available to all levels of creative career progression and not needing to be linked to a specific project. This could be expanded to 1-2yr 'sponsorship' where non-established creatives are given 1-2yrs to dedicate and explore their craft and see if they want to move into a more professional career – perhaps with professional mentoring along the way. This allows artists and creatives the power to be selective of what work they do – and align to their creativity.
- Through legislation ensure safe workplaces for artists – including support for adequate insurances, technical support and psychological support.
- Raising of arts/creative wages to be on par with other industries. Ensuring CEO's/Creative Directors in creative industries (which are often not-for-profit) are earning equal or at least close to financial/manufacturing/sports industry CEO's. Also ensuring that local government arts workers are appropriately banded and supported and are on par with other divisions (ie economy, buildings, etc). This may come through legislation and/or additional financial support specifically for these purposes (particularly for NFP's).
- Strong support for a full ecology of artist development. Including clear, strong and financially viable career pathways (no matter where you live); mentoring; development and opportunities for established artists. Allowing for young people to see that a career in the arts is feasible and viable (breaking down the old adage of the 'poor starving artist') and allowing creatives to follow their passion and skill without compromising with a 'back up' career. As part of this, we need to consider all facets of the arts – not just 'high art'. Also consider the importance of community-

led arts, cultural development, arts management, technical and production skills, experimental and emerging artforms etc.

- Creation of mental health support for creatives that is specialised in the uniqueness of working in the creative industry/space.
- Advocacy and support for appropriate wages and pay for creatives across all levels of their career. With potential to create incentives to organisations/hirers/venues etc to engage with and employ artists (i.e for live music) and to ensure adequate payment for services.
- Create support for longer term projects and initiatives that allow for ideas and engagement to progress over multiple years, rather than one-off short term 'flash' projects.

Challenges:

- It will take time to shift the narratives, perceptions and balance for supporting artists. This means that there needs to be significant investment and importance places on the arts and the centrality of the artist and this needs to be given time to shift the culture surrounding mainstream views around careers in the arts. Long term investment and change management is required to see meaningful results.

## **Strong Institutions**

Opportunities:

- For institutions of all shapes and sizes to be supported- whilst the large institutions are important and hold a place, the small-med sized institutions and community-led orgs are equally as important in the creative ecology. Ensuring that balanced funding, touring and support opportunities are extended beyond the big institutions.
- Stronger partnerships between large institutions and smaller institutions/orgs: to enable sharing of resources, ideas (both ways) and financial support.
- Ensuring that overall funding for institutions/orgs (and artists) is enlarged. There has not been enough significant budget allocations over the last 10-15years to support a growing arts sector adequately – and so there are more people/orgs fighting for a slice of the same sized pie.
- Investment in live performance venues (government, commercial and community run) in order to give them more freedom to program new and innovative work without feeling heavy reliance to 'make money'. In particular in local government setting – ensuring supplementary budgets are appropriately resourced to allow for community-led programming, or experimental programming.

Challenges:

- Not all arts practice nor audiences utilise institutions. Whilst this is important, there also needs to be balance in support and activity outside of institutions.

## Reaching the Audience

Opportunity:

- To set targets of number of local performers/artists etc that are programmed. Similarly, this could be brought back into tv and streaming: ensuring that content is relevant to Australian audiences, supports and highlights local creative industry and creates solid career pathways for arts workers, producers, technicians, etc.
- Support education and promotion of how arts and culture are intrinsic to most people be it through reading, listening to music, design – break down the perceptions that the arts is ‘not for everyone’. Through this everyday connection, there is a greater chance of lifting the social standing of the arts and creativity away from a ‘nice to have’ to being recognised for the essential cultural, social, economic contributor to our society.
- Support initiatives that reach audiences outside of institutions. Through financial support, community-led initiatives, art in public places, mentoring and audience development support etc.
- Support the export of the creative industries internationally – ensure the global audience has the opportunity to experience and appreciate Australian creativity and that Australian creatives are paid and given fair opportunity to present on the global stage.
- Strong support for community-led and small-med arts initiatives/organisations. Their work can often be the first gateway for audiences to connect to the arts, and so empowering and financially supporting them allows their impact to be greater.
- Utilising initiatives to encourage audience participation and engagement with arts and culture – this is important as living costs increase and disposable income is more scarce for the majority of people. Initiatives like the recent entertainment rebate in Victoria may encourage people to get out and experience more arts and cultural activities. Also supporting artists and venues so they can reduce costs to the punter may also assist.

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

It is so important that our First Nations representation, stories and culture are shared and that this is meaningful. First Nations have been the custodians of this land for so long and this is far from being recognised enough. We need to adapt (or even remove) the colonial focus and processes to ensure that First Nations culture and creativity comes first. I want to

have my children know of key First Nations cultural stories, songs, words, history and places of significance – just as they do European nursery rhymes.

## **A Place for Every Story**

As someone who has grown up and worked in the outer suburbs, I am so passionate that opportunities extend beyond the cities and the outer regions. This area seems to be missed in funding and touring opportunities. As such, people who live in these areas or grow up in these areas, can't see how they can viably have careers in the creative industries. Our story extends beyond cities, outside of rural spaces. We have such diverse demographics in Australia – it's important that the multitude of stories are represented, so that there is validation. Creating opportunities for people in the places they are born, grow up in or reside in means that people don't need to choose between the places they love and their careers or opportunities.

## **The Centrality of the Artist**

I want to live in a world where artists are able to create, experiment and engage without having to compromise because they can't pay rent. I want artists and the creative industries to be seen and encouraged as viable and long career paths.

I believe all students should have the opportunity to experience a variety of artforms as part of their primary and secondary education (and beyond) and that undertaking an arts stream subject is considered as compulsory as undertaking a science or maths based subject.

Having clear career pathways and support for artists across all stages of their career is so important. I don't want my children (or anyone else's child) feel they need to choose between financial stability and following their creative potential. I want artists and creatives to be recognised fully and celebrate for the social, economic and cultural contribution they make. I want to them to be support for longevity in their careers and to dispel the adage of the 'poor starving artist'. Personally, I want to be able to continue my career in the arts industries and still provide for my family.

## **Strong Institutions**

I believe institutions play a strong role in sharing and promoting the arts. However, I also feel there is a need to support smaller and mid sized organisations to connect at a grass roots level. Institutions can be confronting and I think that we need to ensure a balance between focus on institutions and doing things differently to connect with broader audiences

## **Reaching the Audience**

I think its really important that audiences are given the opportunity to connect in a wide variety of ways with arts and culture. From going to shows or institutions, to seeing things

on the street, to what they watch or read in their homes to how they play and connect. We need to ensure that there are opportunities for audiences to engage and participate and that grass roots, community led and early career initiatives are given strong support – as these can often be how audiences feel they can connect in a non-intimidating space.

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

I'd like to see legislation that ensures that every state and territory is required to have an arts/cultural policy – no matter what government is in power at the time.