

Diversity Arts Australia

Submission into the National Cultural Policy

About Diversity Arts Australia

Diversity Arts Australia is the peak national organisation promoting racial equity across the arts, cultural and screen sectors. Diversity Arts works to build a creative sector that reflects Australia's true cultural diversity and believes creative expression is a fundamental human right, which strengthens and connects communities.

We are committed to working for ethno-cultural and migrant cultural equity and our work is underpinned by principles of human rights and the belief that a truly diverse creative sector is fundamental to a democratic, inclusive, sustainable society.

Diversity Arts combines service provision — resources, events, research, training — with creative production. We act as a broker between artists, industry, educators and government, and commission content from artists that articulates key issues and showcases best practice. While our focus is on cultural and linguistic diversity (CaLD),¹ we work intersectionally and in partnership with other communities to deliver programs.

The recommendations draw on our extensive consultations with culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) artists and creative workers, arts and screen organisations, and people working in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism in the sector. This submission is also informed by years of research and advocacy.

¹ Our use of the term “culturally and linguistically diverse” is inclusive of people who are first, second or third generation migrants or members of ethnic communities. This includes Australia-born people who may self-identify or engage with the languages, customs or cultural specificities of ancestral heritages that differ from those of Anglo-Australians. This also includes people from refugee backgrounds and people on temporary visas. However we understand the limitations of this term, including that people tend not to identify as “culturally and linguistically diverse”. We use CaLD while acknowledging that the term can't capture the nuance and lived experience of different people based on culture, ethnicity, residential status, language, class, gender and sexuality. At times we refer to people, communities and creatives of colour to further emphasise that non-Anglo-Celtic communities experience the sector through the framework of race and of being racialised people. We also at times refer to “culturally and racially marginalised” people, communities and artists.

Recommendations

This submission begins with recommendations regarding all five pillars of the policy, followed by background context of CaLD experiences in the creative sector. Diversity Arts are also part of the Consortium of National Peak Arts Organisations and we endorse submissions made by the peaks.² The consortium strongly supports the development of, and investment in, the National Cultural Policy. We encourage a commitment that the Policy will guide the more comprehensive development of a 10-year National Cultural Plan which will work across portfolios to leverage and invest in the civic benefits of arts and cultural programs.

First Nations

We recognise that our advocacy and policy success is dependent on the needs of First Nations artists and arts organisations being met, and we support the submissions made by First Nations artists, creative workers and organisations. Anti-racism, diversity and inclusion work in the creative sector must foreground First Nations communities and must not conflate First Nations and settler-migrant experiences of racism and exclusion. We believe that CaLD settler-migrants must develop meaningful, practical solidarity with First Nations communities, and support First Nations-led initiatives and programs. Following this and our work with First Nations colleagues, including on the *Lost Work* survey recommendations,³ we propose:

- **Self-determination for First Nations initiatives:** We support First Nations peoples demands for self-determination as an embedded principle in all First Nations programs and initiatives.
- **Targeted investment in First Nations arts sectors:** The First Nations pillar of the policy must move beyond “recognise and celebrate” to “invest, implement and sustain”. Funding must be increased for self-determined First Nations arts organisations.
- **Targeted support for First Nations artists and creative workers:** Small-medium self-determined First Nations businesses and organisations require targeted financial support to remedy the crisis state-of-employment pathways for First Nations artists and creative workers.
- **Platform First Nations artists and creative workers:** Create processes and settings for artists and performers who are not employees of organisations to have their voices and needs foregrounded.
- **First Nations procurement and ethical creative control:** The sector requires procurement policies and practices seeking work from First Nations artists and creative workers. This necessitates a national standard for providing economic and business opportunities to First Nations businesses, artists and creative workers, facilitating ethical Indigenous creative control.

² Members include: BlakDance, APRA/AMCOS, Arts Access Australia, Ausdance National, Australian Museum and Galleries Assoc, Australian Music Centre, Australian Writer's Guild, Diversity Arts Australia, First Nations Media, Live Performance Australia, Moogahlin Arts Centre, National Association for the Visual Arts, Performing Arts Connections Australia, Regional Arts Australia, Screen Producers Association, Symphony Services Australia, Theatre Network Australia, Australian Society of Authors, Australian Festival Association.

³ Diversity Arts Australia, *Lost Work 2.0 Survey* (2022), www.diversityarts.org.au/tools-resources/read-lost-work-for-creatives-of-colour-and-organisations-2-0/

A Place for Every Story

The main call to action in this submission is for cultural diversity and racial equity to be promoted and safeguarded in the sector. **Crucially, diversity and equity principles must be embedded into all five pillars of the policy.** In order for “every story” to have “a place” in the nation, there is a need for resourcing, including support for new and existing networks, organisations and infrastructure for culturally diverse creatives and communities. Below we outline key policies and initiatives which will lead to this ultimate goal.

The recommendations we make also fall under our proposal for an **industry-led anti-racism strategy**. The arts and creative industries are well poised to be leaders in enacting the Australian Human Rights Commission’s National Anti-Racism Framework, with the Albanese Government committing \$7.5 million dollars toward the development and implementation of the Framework.⁴ **The Australian arts and creative sectors need a robust policy and accountability mechanisms that ensure people who experience structural exclusions have opportunities to meaningfully participate in this economy.** Strategies to embed diversity, inclusion and anti-racism in the National Cultural Policy include:

Modernising funding and support

- **Equity-tested public funding:** A key action in modernising funding and support is embedding equity principles into funding activities. We call for equity-tested public funding opportunities, including a minimum 39% of funding earmarked for culturally diverse communities and artists to be representative of the Australian population.
- **Embedded diversity standards in publicly-funded creative work:** Creative work must have accountability mechanisms for diversity which should be measured annually and publicly, as is the case in Britain.⁵ These standards must address representation, themes and narratives, creative leadership and project teams, industry access and opportunities, and audience development.
- **Accountability for diversity, equity and inclusion:** All recipients of public funding must be accountable for the diversity of their workforce, leaders, procurement of artistic projects and programming - with strong measures and accountabilities regarding cultural and racial equity to ensure their relevance and sustainability.

Employment and material support

- **Targeted leadership and professional development opportunities:** Culturally and racially marginalised people must be given opportunities to be in decision-making positions. A national cultural policy should promote investment in targeted multiyear leadership and professional development initiatives for culturally diverse people.

⁴ Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, Andrew Giles, has stated that “An Albanese Labor Government will deliver on an anti-racism strategy where the Morrison Government has failed to act, to ensure no matter where you are from, no Australian is left behind.” Andrew Giles (2022) *LABOR COMMITS TO NEW ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY*, <https://www.andrewgiles.com.au/media-centre/media-releases/labor-commits-to-new-anti-racism-strategy/>

⁵ British Film Institute, *BFI Diversity Standards*, www.bfi.org.uk/inclusion-film-industry/bfi-diversity-standards

- **Employment pathways must be promoted at all levels, including for emerging, mid-career, and experienced creative workers.** This includes internships, traineeships and capacity building and leadership programs for the most underrepresented culturally diverse creative workers, including young people, newly arrived migrant and refugee communities.
- **Designated positions to support culturally diverse creatives:** To address the underrepresentation of culturally diverse creatives in the sector, the sector must be supported to provide designated positions for culturally diverse people, for example, designated industry roles, paid internships, and multicultural/cultural liaison roles. State-based Anti-Discrimination Boards currently do not allow targeted roles for people from CaLD backgrounds.
- **Targeted investment in culturally diverse positions:** Funding is required for specific culturally diverse positions and networks nationally that are able to support migrant, non-English speaking and refugee creatives. These dedicated arts/creative support roles are crucial to assist excluded creatives from participating in the creative sector, accessing funding and employment, and making connections.

Research and language

- **Investment in sector-wide diversity measurement:** While we know from our decades of experience and practice that there are major inequities in access to the sector, there is an urgent need for more in-depth data collection, analysis and insights to inform policy and practice. Support must be provided for quantitative and qualitative research that explores the differential experiences of culturally diverse artists and creatives, as well as documenting their positions in the sector. This research must be holistic and apply an intersectional lens to understanding the nuances of different peoples' lived experience based on culture, ethnicity, residential status, language, class, gender and sexuality. Crucially, research and data collection approaches must be validated by people with lived experience of what is being measured. It should aim to be comprehensive, consistent and joined up across the arts ecosystem and over time. It is vital that when measuring the diversity of a workforce, there is accountability for patterns of exclusion of people from different underrepresented backgrounds.
- **Support for diversity, equity and inclusion evaluation:** Resourcing must be provided to evaluate diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, prioritising how First Nations and culturally diverse creatives experience the initiative or program. Outcomes must be measured in terms of inclusion impact to communities (including the stories told, elders supported and arts practices elevated), in addition to diversity metrics. Crucially, people from minority CaLD backgrounds with lived experience engaging with the sector should inform the design and facilitation of research and data collection in this area.
- **Self-determined language and terminology:** While we use the term "CaLD" in this submission, this terminology is widely contested, with artists and creative workers from culturally diverse communities tending not to identify with the term.⁶ The reliance on this term also has implications for data collection and can lead to inequalities being further entrenched. This presents an opportunity for the Australia Council for the Arts,

⁶ Australia Council for the Arts, *Towards Equity: A research overview of diversity in Australia's arts and cultural sector* (2021) <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Towards-Equity-Report.pdf>

Screen Australia and the Office for the Arts to work with the sector to use terminology that is appropriate and self-determined.

- **A reframing of the use of the term “Arts” in the National Cultural Policy:** While we refer to “arts” and “artists” throughout this submission, this terminology often excludes many individuals and industries making up the creative sector. It is important that the terminology used in the Cultural Policy and elsewhere is inclusive of museums, the screen and games industries, and other relevant creative industries.
- **Improved ethnicity data collection from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS):** The ABS must be supported to collect more accurate data on the Australian population’s cultural background. This will provide proper indicators for diversity in all sectors, and will allow for impact measurement of diversity and inclusion initiatives.

The Centrality of the Artist

The COVID-19 health crisis has exacerbated many challenges for the arts and creative sectors, but for artists and creative workers from culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds, this exclusion has been an ongoing, historical experience.⁷ To ensure that the CaLD arts sector can recover from the crisis we propose the following:

- **Targeted investment in underrepresented artists:** Support for a sector-wide anti-racism strategy with accompanying targeted investment in multi-year projects that elevate diverse voices and address community challenges. Such a strategy will improve the cultural safety of the creative sector and improve pathways for CaLD creatives. It’s difficult to make long term impactful plans without stability.
- **Targeted investment in professional development:** Addressing the underrepresentation of culturally diverse artists and creative workers with targeted investment initiatives such as paid internships, mentorships and capacity-building programs. These should be targeted to the most underrepresented CaLD creative workers, particularly young people, newly arrived migrant and refugee communities and adult migrant creatives who find it difficult to access work in the sector.
- **Equitable youth arts investment:** The youth arts sector needs to urgently be rebuilt. This sector is an important gateway for culturally diverse young people and their livelihoods in the arts and creative industries, and so this recovery must have equity principles embedded.
- **Investment in localised, and state-based small-medium CaLD-led arts, screen and creative organisations:** Such organisations provide brokerage, connection, support, and pathways to employment and skills development for CaLD artists and creative workers.
- **Improved accessibility to grants and grant writing capacity building for racially marginalised creatives:** Underrepresented creatives – particularly people whose first language is not English and newly arrived artists – must be supported in submitting grant applications to ensure funding can be equitably distributed. This could be addressed, for example, through longer lead times for grant applications, translation and interpretation services, and grant writing workshops facilitated by a network of agencies who work with marginalised communities.

⁷ Diversity Arts Australia, *Lost Work 2.0 Survey* (2022), <https://diversityarts.org.au/tools-resources/read-lost-work-for-creatives-of-colour-and-organisations-2-0/>

- **Redefining concepts like “Excellence” and “contemporary Australian art” to counter exclusion:** Policy must expand its understanding of these concepts which have excluded the arts practices of many racially marginalised people. Formalised arts classifications can lock people out and discriminate against living and evolving arts practices that are considered “traditional” and therefore not contemporary Australian art.
- **Centrelink recognition of artists and creatives as professionals:** Centrelink must be supported to recognise art and creative work as a profession in order to better financially support creatives experiencing lost work.
- **Industrial reform founded on equity principles:** We support the industrial reform recommendations made by the Consortium of National Peak Arts Organisations. Any industrial reform must embed diversity and equity principles.

Strong Institutions

We believe that strong institutions are inclusive ones, and we respect the importance of a healthy arts ecology, where grassroots, and small-medium entities, work alongside larger bodies and institutions. We therefore propose:

- **Cultural safety:** Strong institutions must be culturally safe and accountable. Work conditions must be made culturally safe with cultural safety principles and practices embedded into policies, practices and governance.
- **Education and capacity building:** Ongoing education and training in anti-racism and cultural safety in a creative sector context is critical and must be supported. These long term capacity building programs should be compulsory for all, with specifically tailored programs for those in leadership positions. In recent years, Creative Victoria has shown leadership in this area, introducing a suite of diversity, equity and inclusion programs focused on capacity-building for culturally diverse creatives and collectives, and for Victoria’s major arts companies. Additionally, there should be structured training and capacity building opportunities and programs for creatives and cultural leaders to improve professional pathways.
- **Ecological policy approach:** The National Cultural Policy should recognise the arts and screen sectors as an ecology, where the small to medium sector provides underrepresented people opportunities for excellence and pathways to employment and engagement in larger bodies.
- **Brokering partnerships:** Meaningful collaboration and consultation between business, government and small community-led organisations must be supported. Larger industry bodies, businesses, organisations and government departments should be incentivised to work with and support the independent and small to medium sector. This recognises the investment, experience and expertise of small to medium organisations in providing supportive pathways for culturally diverse creatives and communities into the arts, screen and creative sectors.
- **Equitable philanthropy brokerage:** The Australia Council should provide equitable brokerage between philanthropists and creative organisations, and this should particularly be accessible to smaller organisations. We support models such as the former Arts Support which helped grassroots, community led organisations in their fundraising. Such partnerships should foreground capacity building for fundraising.

- **Targeting support to CaLD-led organisations/companies:** Noting that there aren't any CaLD-led companies amongst the major performing arts companies, support for autonomous CaLD-led organisations/companies is sorely needed.
- **Cross-sector engagement:** Policy must recognise the arts, screen and creative sectors impact the whole Australian economy. It's imperative that there are opportunities for cross-sectoral collaborations with other government portfolios and agencies.

Reaching the Audience

Culturally diverse people are more engaged as audiences and consumers in the arts, screen and creative sectors, however they are underrepresented when it comes to most mainstream and publicly-funded cultural and arts organisations. This provides opportunities to bolster the sector in the following ways:

- **Targeted investment in geographically and socioeconomically marginalised areas:** Policy must address the *place* of audiences and artists, with support targeted towards artists and small organisations in locations with higher underrepresented migrant populations.
- **Invest in global audiences and transnational connections:** People with a migrant background and connections to other countries have the capacity to connect with and attract global and diasporic markets for their work. The National Cultural Policy has an opportunity to target initiatives and invest in these highly networked communities. Drawing on migrants' experience and knowledge will strengthen international understanding, finding the common ground for our global society to forge the deep connections we desperately need in these uncertain times.
- **Measuring and reporting on the diversity of audiences:** Major arts organisations funded to reach the breadth of Australian audiences must be held accountable and demonstrate that they do. It should be a requirement that those who receive funding from government, in particular major organisations in the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework and major arts, screen and cultural institutions, measure and report on the diversity of their audiences annually. This data should be made publicly available, as is done in the UK by bodies like Arts Council England.⁸

⁸ Arts Council England, *Diversity Data*, <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-data/diversity-data>

Context

The 2021 Australian census has indicated the nation to be more culturally diverse than ever before. Around 51.5% of Australian residents have one or both parents born overseas; 3 in 10 Australians were themselves born overseas; and, 5.5 million Australians speak a language other than English at home - 24.8% of the population (an increase of 800, 000 since the last census).⁹ With the 2026 census slated to gather better statistics on ethnicity, the cultural diversity of the population is likely to continue to increase. This reality brings with it many opportunities and challenges for the arts, cultural and screen sectors.

Following Article 27 of the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, "Everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life of community", however, in Australia this right is severely limited by structural exclusions faced by historically marginalised and currently

underrepresented communities. Australian State and Federal arts and cultural sector funding bodies should clearly articulate an expectation that the work they fund actively and genuinely reflects and supports the diversity and complexity of contemporary Australia. Accountability for meeting this expectation must be pursued with rigour, particularly for those who receive the majority of funding.

In recent years, there have been increasing calls for more diversity in arts, screen and media. Twitter campaigns such as #LogiesSoWhite and #JustNotThatMany are just a few examples of the ways in which public conversations about systemic racism and a lack of cultural diversity in Australia's arts, screen and media sectors have taken centre stage.

Research shows that people from CaLD backgrounds continue to be excluded from employment and leadership opportunities in the arts, screen and media sectors despite CaLD communities contributing more money to the arts than the national average.¹⁰ While highly engaged in the sector, culturally diverse people are underrepresented in cultural leadership roles and among grant recipients,¹¹ and Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds are underrepresented among artists. Many culturally diverse artists point to continued experiences of exclusion within arts venues and organisations, educational institutions, government and funding bodies.¹²

- In 2022, Diversity Arts Australia's research shows that the pandemic crisis is likely to lead to a loss of a generation of underrepresented First Nations and CaLD creatives who have struggled to survive and maintain their livelihoods in the sector due to loss of work and increased racism and exclusion.¹³
- In 2021, the Australia Council released research demonstrating that arts and culture does not yet reflect the diversity of our population.¹⁴
- In 2018, Diversity Arts Australia found that CaLD people were under-represented across every leadership role in every cultural sector, organisational type and jurisdiction.¹⁵

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021)

¹⁰ Australia Council for the Arts, *Towards Equity: A research overview of diversity in Australia's arts and cultural sector* (2021) <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Towards-Equity-Report.pdf>

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ Diversity Arts Australia, *Lost Work 2.0 Survey* (2022), <https://diversityarts.org.au/tools-resources/read-lost-work-for-creatives-of-colour-and-organisations-2-0/>

¹⁴ Australia Council for the Arts, *Towards Equity: A research overview of diversity in Australia's arts and cultural sector* (2021) <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Towards-Equity-Report.pdf>

¹⁵ Diversity Arts Australia, *Shifting the Balance Report* (2019) www.diversityarts.org.au/app/uploads/Shifting-the-Balance-DARTS-small.pdf

- In 2021, Media Diversity Australia found more than 75% of media presenters, commentators and reporters have an Anglo-Celtic background while only 6% have an Indigenous or non-European background.¹⁶
- In 2017, Kim Ho's independent research on Australia's 10 major theatre companies found that 70 out of 95 productions were both written and directed by artists with an Anglo-Celtic background.¹⁷
- In 2016 Screen Australia found that only 18% of main characters on Australian TV were from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds.¹⁸
- People from a non-English speaking background account for only 10% of the arts workforce, compared to 18% of the general workforce.¹⁹

Within this context, we commend *Creative Australia's* goal to "Ensure that government support reflects the diversity of Australia and that all citizens, wherever they live, whatever their background or circumstances, have a right to shape our cultural identity and its expression." Realising this requires government support to ensure equitable access for all people, regardless of background or circumstance, to opportunities for shaping cultural identity and expression.

All five pillars of *Creative Australia* offer great opportunity in bolstering the sector by drawing on Australia's unique position as a country with a diverse First Nations history, present and future – whose cultural diversity continues to change and grow. This diversity is one of our greatest social, cultural and economic assets. It leads to "greater artistic vibrancy and innovation"²⁰ and contributes to greater engagement in the arts. Culturally diverse people are more likely to engage with the arts, they attend more arts events, and feel more positively about the place of the arts in society than non-culturally diverse people.²¹ They are far more likely to give money and support to the arts, too.²²

The National Cultural Policy must address these realities. Such a policy must centre equity for culturally and racially marginalised communities, including concrete strategies to ensure pathways for employment, retention and leadership for underrepresented artists, creative workers and communities. Below we outline our key recommendations in line with the five pillars of *Creative Australia*.

Diversity Arts Australia focuses on cultural diversity and racial equity in terms of migrant communities, people of colour, people with a refugee background and culturally and racially marginalised communities. We support the work of organisations advocating for people from underrepresented backgrounds – including First Nations, d/Deaf and Disabled, and LGBTQI+ communities - but we focus on advocating for the needs of CaLD communities. This recognises, too, that the CaLD lived experience also intersects with other dimensions of underrepresented diversity and exclusion.

¹⁶ Media Diversity Australia, *Who Gets To Tell Australian Stories?* (2021) www.mediadiversityaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Who-Gets-To-Tell-Australian-Stories_LAUNCH-VERSION.pdf

¹⁷ Kim Ho, *Cultural Diversity in Australian Theatre* (2017)

¹⁸ Screen Australia, *Seeing Ourselves: Reflections on Diversity in Australian TV Drama* (2016),

www.screenaustralia.gov.au/fact-finders/reports-and-key-issues/reports-and-discussion-papers/seeing-ourselves

¹⁹ Australia Council for the Arts, *Making Art Work Report* (2017) www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/making-art-work/ (2021) <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Towards-Equity-Report.pdf>, p58.

²⁰ Australia Council for the Arts, *Towards Equity: A research overview of diversity in Australia's arts and cultural sector* (2021) <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Towards-Equity-Report.pdf>

²¹ Australia Council for the Arts, *Towards Equity: A research overview of diversity in Australia's arts and cultural sector* (2021) <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Towards-Equity-Report.pdf>

²² *ibid.*