

National Cultural Policy

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19 August 2022

Today I turned 57 in regional Australia, my home with two migration stories behind me. It's a wonder I found a job in the arts in the regions after trying to achieve this outcome in a metro city. So, it is obvious I will be submitting a voice for regional artists and regional audiences. I would hope that when all is said and done with this cultural policy future children and families living in regional Australia can experience the arts without feeling like they are receiving "regional sloppy seconds" as per my teen after a q&a at a performance in Dubbo, NSW.

What we need is equity in the creative space, its equity that will inform opportunities for artists that will then lend itself to a more culturally aware and engaged society. First Nations recognition and self-determination is a methodology in practice in regional NSW and we recognise our relationships with our community to support engagement and opportunities. Any policy should also recognise the individuality of these relationships and ensure there are no barriers to opportunities by making things harder to achieve them. Artists are equipped to tell a story, to reach a larger audience if and only if they are in the position to do so. The language and tools used by artists are a great entry point to any question or conversation, use it. Be mindful in this cultural policy of the existence of an artist, provide pathways for this to happen by valuing education and ensuring young people have access to participate in the arts. Strong institutions are nice, but without artists, you have empty buildings. Reaching audiences- so many points of entry from your passive observer to those that wish to participate in the arts. It appears that in the region if you paint a silo they will come, but does it mean they will stay, has it changed them (or those that live in the community) in any way? Did it provide an access point to something a bit more meaningful? And my answer is no, art on the surface is just that on the surface and does not support the fundamentals of experience, thought, change and query. If regional artists and audiences are still seen at disadvantage because of an address in 2022 there is still a lot of work to be done.

Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion.

Regards,
Alicia Leggett