

National Cultural Policy Submission

Lily Hayman

I am submitting this as an artist

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 should be no challenges to the genuine inclusion and celebration of First Nations culture and practices into Australia's broader cultural landscape. I say that not as a naïve hope for the way that this process will unfold, but as a statement that anyone who challenges this inclusion and celebration (particularly those who are not of First Nations descent) should not be taken seriously or with good faith. Australian culture is First Nations culture and our policies and cultural practice should reflect that. The opportunity to engage all Australians with the truth of First Nations history and the beauty of First Nations culture is enormous and should be First Nations led at First Nations people's pace and desire.

A Place for Every Story:

Diversity of voice and perspective is essential to a robust and world-class cultural sector. I would like to see an improvement of diversity in major curatorial roles at major institutions, including more First Nations, People of Colour and Women of Colour in Artistic Director roles throughout the sector.

I would also like to see Young People included in the cultural conversation from the outset. Young People have a unique story and voice, one that is lost with time in a way others are not. Dedicated programs, roles and events for Young People and by Young People are essential to the continued growth of the cultural sector after the terrible stalling effect of Covid-19 on Young People's progression into cultural careers.

The Centrality of the Artist'

The opportunity to increase the quality and impact of our cultural sector lies with valuing artists. In the current climate, artists have very few avenues to create risky, challenging new work which will push boundaries and help evolve Australia's cultural life beyond the commercial. A universal basic income for all Australians, not just artists, is a fantastic opportunity to engage all citizens in the arts and culture and democratise the artistic output of our biggest institutions.

Young Artists are having to wait increasingly longer after COVID for their first opportunities, and we are losing the voice of a generation to other sectors due to the financial situation so many Young People find themselves in. Guaranteed income for artists, or at the very least 'artist' being a recognised and valued career by support networks such as Centrelink would help foster a new, bold generation willing to make work which pushes beyond the status quo.

Strong Institutions:

Our cultural institutions have been gutted, and the entire arts sector is propped up on the unpaid labour of passionate artists. This is not just the case for artists in the room who take their work home with them. Arts administrators and technical staff are being forced to work untenable hours for comparatively low or no pay in order to keep the arts industry afloat.

Institutions need their funding returned, at a level adjusted for inflation, and freedom to use that funding on operations and projects that push the status quo. This means funding institutions to a point that they are not entirely reliant of a previous 'art-goer' subscriber base. To have 'a place for every story', we need to be able to fund institutions to support those stories and audiences and replace previous reliance on White dominated 'classics' to move tickets.

Reaching the Audience.

Ticket prices to arts and events must be drastically cut if we genuinely want to engage the broader Australian public in our best arts and cultural life. Money is a huge barrier often not considered when trying to ensure accessibility for all.

We also must genuinely increase the accessibility of venues, exhibitions and productions for those living with a Disability and/or who are d/Deaf. To reach an audience, we should be allowing for any and all audience members to attend work. Specialised accessibility funding and training should be provided to all institutions, and Accessible Arts should be supported to expand.

Young People also must be a target audience of culture and arts programs moving forward. Young People are often cut off from attending such events by a variety of factors, cost being primary among them. To program work and make it available to Young People is to foster a generation with a love and appreciate for the arts. It is a long term investment that must be made for any serious outcome to be achieved.

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 important to me that First Nations culture be a celebrated part of the National consciousness because it is exquisite. The genuine celebration of First Nations culture is possible and beautiful, we can look at New Zealand as an example of the important and healing that can come from truth telling and making space for First Nations voices. I dream of a day when First Nations Australians and their culture are respected, revered, and rejoiced in.

A Place for Every Story:

This is important to my personal practice as I for one am simply tired of the stories we have always heard. Australia has had much rich cultural output in the past, which it seems has been drowned out and forgotten since the 90s. I am a Young Person, I am only 24, but I know that there is more to Australian culture than we are currently getting. As the most successful multicultural nation on the planet we have a unique opportunity to encourage diversity of voice, perspective, approach and form.

I also think it is incredibly important for Young People to be included under this heading, as it is clear in many areas of society that Young People are the most socially conscious generation for a long time. Having grown up with knowledge and access to the world, the voices of Young People are important to be heard in all spaces.

The Centrality of the Artist

The inclusion of this as a pillar gives me some hope for the future of the Australian Arts Sector. As I enter a career in the arts I see artists disenfranchised and burnt out. The centrality of the artist and

the valuing of art as a career which contributes a lot to broader society gives me hope for a more diverse, vibrant and risky artistic output from Australia in years to come. Artists can only take genuine risks in their art when they are not afraid for their personal stability. If we can value artists, the value of their art will increase from sheer ability to explore the currently unexplorable.

Strong Institutions

The year I stepped out of uni, the funding for the arts from the Federal Government was decimated. I am yet to see an industry where institutions below the top tier Major Institutions have any form of year to year stability. This is completely untenable. Not least because we are careening towards a situation in which no institution can be properly staffed, as the smaller institutions which act as training grounds for artists and administrators alike are disappearing. It is vital that strong institutions goes beyond just the top. In fact it is more useful to create Strong Institutions on a ground level which feed up, than the opposite.

Reaching the Audience.

Art does not belong to the shiny buildings and new theatres. The best art is often made in chance moments by unexpected people. Supporting regional arts, Young People and community-based work is essential to expanding the greater audience of the arts sector. Everyone I know likes art. Most of them hate going to galleries or the theatre. We need to do more to change the perception, accessibility and sense of classism that can surround the arts.

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

I support the call from arts organisations specialising with Youth engagement for the following measures:

1. Include “Young People's Engagement with the Arts ” as a priority of the National Cultural Plan.
2. Establish an ongoing, dedicated funding stream for Young People's Engagement with the Arts and invest in companies whose *core business* is young people's engagement, administered by the Australia Council for the Arts;
3. Establish targeted, cross-department streams of funding for Young People's Engagement to work with: Health and Mental Health, Employment, Youth Justice, Regional Youth and Education – co-managed by the Australia Council
4. Establish Young People's Advisory Committees that reflect the diversity of young Australians, managed independently, as ongoing standing committees for the Australia Council for the Arts and the Minister for the Arts.