

element.

*National Cultural
Policy Submission*

— August 2022

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element are pleased to provide the following submission to contribute to the consultation and discussion around the National Cultural Policy. We believe this consultation process is an important opportunity for the sector to contribute to the development of a policy best suited to our community. We commend the Australian Government for taking this first step to listen to the diverse voices of our arts sector.

We applaud and support the decision to create a National Cultural Policy, and assume that a subsequent 10-year strategic vision and action plan will also be developed. We take this opportunity to also note the alignment with the recently announced 20 Year Infrastructure Strategy, in particular recommendation 86 which suggests that each state develop a 10+ year state arts and culture strategy, addressing infrastructure and investment needs.

We trust that the National Cultural Policy, a subsequent National Cultural Plan, and State responses to develop 10+ year Arts and Culture Strategies will represent synergies across the sector and result in a cohesive and practical approach. This suite of documents should also align with state and local planning documents to deliver seamless integration, grounding a national vision for arts and culture to be recognised as an essential and irreplaceable aspect of the lives of all Australians.

element's Arts & Culture team's services include a diverse suite of strategic planning, capacity building and advisory services, informed by extensive consultation and nation-wide networks across various industries. Our work delivering Arts and Culture Strategies; procurement and project management of public art and creative projects; cultural infrastructure strategy; art collection maintenance and planning; and artist and cultural sector development programs; proves to us every day how cultural activity contributes to rich and vibrant communities, resulting in thriving local art sectors and economies.

In line with the multidisciplinary nature of our organisation, we believe that a national cultural policy should include an arts policy, but also policies that address communities and social groups, education and national institutions, heritage and innovation, as well as areas of public administration and impact where art is a tool, and not just a product (for example; tourism, social cohesion, health and welfare, education, and creative economy).

We stand in support of the submissions being made by peak body organisations for the state, as well as those made by leading national bodies for the Arts and Culture sector. Our team acknowledge the multitude of reports and recommendations put forward in the last decade regarding the health, development and growth of Arts and Cultural Industries. In particular, we add our voice in support of the findings and recommendations outlined in the following reports:

- [The Big Picture 2: Public Expenditure on Artistic, Cultural and Creative activity in Australia in 2007-08 to 2019-20 by A New Approach](#)
- [Behind the Scenes: Drivers of Arts and Cultural Policy Settings in Australia and Beyond by A New Approach](#)
- [The Report for the COVID Financial and Wellbeing Impact Survey Results by the Chamber of Arts and Culture WA](#)
- [The National Inquiry for Sculpting a National Cultural Policy tabled in parliament.](#)
- [Open your eyes 2020nine manifesto concrete steps](#)

It is our hope that the resolved National Cultural Policy would adopt a holistic view of everything the arts and culture sector contributes to national and global economy, and recognises the value of investment to the sector under the five pillars.

First Nations:

Recognising and respecting the crucial place of these stories at the centre of our arts and culture.

Challenges:

- Limited entrance opportunities or support models to encourage First Nations artists and creatives to develop their practice in culturally safe contexts.
- There are limited fairly compensated employment opportunities to encourage First Nations leaders or potential leaders to stay in the arts.
- Heavy reliance on existing under-resourced First Nations arts and cultural organisations, artists and creatives to champion cultural and social change.
- Small pool of First Nations artists working professionally are subject to burnout due to demands on their creative and cultural advisory work.
- Ongoing First Nations consultation on strategies, projects and governance is a financial challenge for many organisations struggling with resourcing.
- Lack of access to culturally and geographically appropriate education and professional/skills development throughout regional Australia, particularly WA, restricts First Nations communities and individual's capacity to engage with income-generating opportunities.

Opportunities:

- Invest in First Nations-led education, training, mentorship, and skills development programs to support First Nations employment and representation in sector employment at all levels, including leadership roles, boards, and advisory groups.
- Reconsider inflexible governance models to allow not-for-profit arts and cultural organisations to have paid Board positions.
- Introduce and support targeted programs focused on creating and retaining First Nations employment, supporting new businesses and strengthening existing businesses.
- Designated funding for First Nations roles for arts peak bodies and touring agencies sector-wide.
- Provide access to funding for arts and cultural organisations to engage First Nations cultural consultation.
- Invest in First Nations-led education and training programs for artists and arts & culture workers.
- Invest in digital solutions and connections throughout regional Australia, addressing NBN blackspots.

A place for every story:

Reflecting the diversity of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.

Challenges:

- An export mindset exists. For the most part, cultural products are created in capital cities and delivered to the regions. Artists and creatives that exist in the regions are significantly disadvantaged in developing or growing their practice due to lack of education, resourcing, funding, and acknowledgment. As a result, representing diverse local stories is significantly more challenging for remote creatives.
- In states such as WA, the sheer geographic size of the state makes it difficult to find a place for every story. Current funding opportunities made available to WA do not recognise the unique challenges that organically emerge from such a vastly diverse and geographically dispersed community.
- The distance and consequent isolation of practitioners and arts workers regional Australia creates challenges and barriers to connecting individuals – particularly beyond digital platforms.
- There is a regional arts and education disconnect – limited specialist teachers or arts curriculum are available to encourage and nurture diverse storytelling.
- Current investment/funding models and governance/developmental structures still have a long way to go before being equitable or accessible – particularly for CaLD, youth, First Nations and disabled artists.

Opportunities:

- Shift the balance from exporting to the regions, to investing in the diverse work and stories produced by regional arts organisations and individuals.
- Recognise the incredible diversity of arts practice and delivery across our various states, and within each state, through marketing campaigns which highlight regional stories.
- Implement a nation-wide standard for measuring the impact of arts and culture in metro and regional locations in order to be able to increase awareness of this value.
- Appropriately resource State and Local Government to be able to support arts industry, grant funding and resource development.
- Utilise a 'hub' based model – de-centralised and/or region-specific support resources and/or funding – to ensure support is provided and appropriately resourced across the whole sector, and not isolated to only well-resourced organisations and regions.
- National trial of alternative funding models (universal base income, regional artist in residency schemes, quick response grants) to reduce access barriers.
- Invest in digital solutions and connections throughout regional Australia, addressing NBN blackspots, and investing in the digital capacity of arts organisations to deliver to all audiences.
- Re-introduce the focus and importance of arts education into curriculum by replacing STEM with STEAM – to encourage, nurture, and develop arts offerings from across the whole state, in alignment with Recommendations 9 and 14 from Sculpting A National Cultural Plan.

The centrality of the artist:

Supporting the artist as worker and celebrating their role as the creators of culture.

Challenges:

- Insecure work, short-term contracts, understaffing and burnout are persistent issues within the arts sector which have been amplified with the additional challenges of COVID-19, and lack of industry-wide government intervention or support.
- Current funding models focus on isolated project delivery and outcomes, with disparate consideration for the core efforts that are invested by creators, or necessary for adequate project management.
- Current lack of alignment across the three tiers of government concerning the strategic direction and the need for arts and cultural planning.
- Lack of specialist arts teachers and arts curriculum available to regional and remote school students to encourage and nurture creative career pathways.
- Long-term funding scarcity and consistent under-resourcing for arts projects, artists and arts organisations has contributed to a de-valuing of arts labour.
- Arts and culture are often recognised for their impact and benefits to mental health, community and social cohesion, yet artists and creatives are often subject to working conditions which are not conducive to maintaining good mental health.

Opportunities:

- Recognise arts and cultural workers as essential workers with the same rights as those in other industries.
- Return of Federal Cultural Minister's Council to enable better alignment of shared strategic goals, including the mandating of a % of LGA spending on arts and culture. This aligns with Recommendation 2: Sculpting A National Cultural Plan.
- All Federal Government funding programs to recognise the **Paying What It Takes Report** and acknowledge the level of administrative support required to build sustainable institutions is 33% of delivery, not 13% (as per average operational allowance with current funding models) – aligning with recommendation 19 from Sculpting A National Cultural Plan.
- Establish an Industry Award rate for the visual arts which legislates the payment of minimum artists' fees.
- Deliver superannuation reform to ensure that casual/contract artists and artworkers receive superannuation contributions.
- Ensure public funding is contingent on the payment of artists at or above minimum standard rates as set out in industry best practice guidelines, and that funding levels are adequate to support those payments.
- Invest in existing peak bodies, support agencies and service organisations to increase professional development programs for artists and arts workers.
- Support universities and TAFEs to expand delivery of professional practice units for all arts students.

Strong institutions:

Providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts and culture.

Challenges:

- Overall investment in Australian arts and culture is not matching the growth in population, increases to Cost-Price Index and impacts of economic inflation. As a result, access to cultural products is becoming increasingly challenging, and contest for funding is increasingly competitive.
- Current support and funding models focus on a measure of outcomes, with disparate consideration for the core efforts that are invested by creators, or necessary for adequate project management.
- There currently exists a lack of alignment from the three tiers of government around the strategic direction (or even the need) for arts and cultural planning. This is particularly relevant in terms of determining who should be responsible for funding organisations.
- New organisations are at a significant disadvantage when it comes to funding opportunities. This discourages the creation of new and innovative organisations.
- Regional infrastructure is not fit for purpose to cater for cultural activities. Upgrades to facilities are seen as a secondary priority after major infrastructure investments.
- Maintenance and management of regional infrastructure relies heavily on an aging volunteer base. Pipeline of creatives with the ability to program and manage our cultural infrastructure is compromised due to limited arts education opportunities for young people, both at a school level and university.

Opportunities:

- Adopt in full the recommendations from Sculpting a National Cultural Plan: Igniting a post-COVID economy for the arts, the final report for the recent Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's Creative and Cultural Industries and Institutions.
- Coordinated national approach that maintains and expands arts infrastructure and invests in new capital in the areas that need it the most – supported and delivered through 10-year strategies by each state.
- Invest in First Nations-led education and training programs for artists and arts & culture workers.
- Invest in succession planning for regional cultural infrastructure assets including training and upskilling for arts workers.
- Increase funding for artist-led education across schools.
- Invest in university funding for creative courses, reduce tuition fees for arts subjects, and remove Ministerial discretion from approving or rejecting research grants recommended and administered by the Australian Research Council (ARC).
- Support universities and TAFEs to expand delivery of professional practice units for all arts students.
- Recognise arts and cultural workers as essential workers with the same rights as those in other industries.
- Invest in support agencies and service organisations to increase professional development programs for artists and arts workers.

Reaching the audience:

Ensuring our stories reach the right people at home and abroad.

Challenges:

- Funding programs do not give adequate weight to the intrinsic value of representation and telling local stories, over quantitative measures such as economic impact.
- Current investment/funding models and governance structures are not equitable or accessible – particularly for CaLD, youth, First Nations and differently-abled artists.
- Regionally based artists and audiences are subject to an export mindset where art is created in capital cities and delivered to the regions.
- Artists and creatives in the regions are significantly disadvantaged in developing or growing their practice due to lack of education opportunities, resourcing, funding and acknowledgment.
- The tyranny of distance and consequent isolation of practitioners and arts workers within Western Australia creates additional challenges and barriers to connecting individuals.
- Tourism does not currently harness/address to full capacity the value of arts in regions and community. Similarly, arts don't fully recognise their tourism and community appeal.

Opportunities:

- Re-establish the National Arts and Culture Accord to facilitate cooperation between three levels of government.
- Reinstate census questions about arts involvement, ABS Cultural and Creative Satellite Accounts and the biannual Meeting of Cultural Ministers.
- Distribution of project funding to give greater consideration to reaching diverse audiences in culturally and geographically appropriate ways.
- Increased flexibility in funding processes and applications to allow greater accessibility.
- Invest in digital solutions and connections throughout regional Australia, addressing NBN blackspots, and investing in the digital capacity of arts organisations to deliver to all audiences.
- Invest in and support arts and cultural tourism, with the Federal Government acting as a connector between the arts and tourism industries for mutual benefit.
- Invest in arts audience development initiatives across metropolitan and regional areas.

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the art and science of place

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