

National Cultural Policy Submission

Outloud

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation; As an artist; As an individual

ABOUT OUTLOUD:

Outloud is an intersectional, CALD-focused social impact arts organisation that creates genuine, meaningful, inspiring opportunities for young people in Western Sydney. We specialise in early-intervention harm-reduction that celebrates strengths and amplifies young people's thoughts and ideas, to create inclusive social cohesion.

Our award-winning projects address nationally relevant issues that are affecting young people in Western Sydney. We follow best practice and evidence-based guidelines with a strong theory of change.

Projects include the RESPECT program for boys aged 12 and under teaching singing and song writing through the lens of identifying and preventing domestic violence and gender stereotypes. It's proven to drive positive change in the participants' lives, relationships, and schools. It has been evaluated by 3 different universities, who found that 98% of participants leave the program with a very strong understanding of the causes and impacts of domestic violence and are committed to preventing it. (Joseph & Joseph, 2019).

Formally known as BYDS – Bankstown Youth Development Service, we've been in Western Sydney since 1991, and have worked with thousands of young people.

Our recommendations regarding each of the pillars:

First Nations

These suggestions are based on conversations with the First Nations organisations, artists and young people that we work with:

- There needs to be more accessible training and performing opportunities for First Nations artists and arts workers.
- We support the submission from First Nations performing arts organisations and their priorities of creating a Skills and Workforce capacity building plan; a dedicated First Nations performing arts commissioning fund; and funding for the cost of cultural processes. We also support their recommended programs and initiatives.
- We also support the Australia Council's 2020 plan to develop a peak body or service organisation for First Nations arts.
- We support motions to increase the number of targeted First Nations arts worker and leadership roles across arts organisations, with programs focused on creating and retaining these roles.
- We suggest developing a policy to support First Nations cultural competency training, Reconciliation Action Plans, and meaningful engagement and opportunities as part of programming, employment, and audience engagement and access.
- Invest in First Nations-led education, training, mentorship and skills development programs to support First Nations employment and representation in middle-tier jobs, leadership roles, boards, and Aboriginal advisory groups.
- Commit targeted financial support for independent self-determined First Nations artists and practitioners.

A Place for Every Story

As mentioned earlier, we're based in Canterbury-Bankstown, in the Blaxland electorate.

- Some information about our place, from the Australia Council's electorate information tool:
 - 54% of people in Blaxland are aged under 35 years.
 - Median weekly household income \$1,222
 - Adults 15+ years 81% attend cultural venues or events
 - Children 5–14 years 91% attend cultural venues or events, and 96% participate in creative activities.

- As a reflection of the work we do, and the place we do it in, we urge you to include “Young People's Engagement with the Arts” as a priority of the National Cultural Plan. Young people deserve to have their stories told, heard, and to see themselves reflected in the cultural landscape, in all their intersecting identities. This area would need access and equity as a foundation.
- The idea of diversity clustering is othering and at worst can be seen as segregation in programming. We ask that the idea and wording is reframed instead to be widening the scope of programming and audiences to include the whole of our community. This should be intersectional – covering age, different abilities and access needs, culture, language, genders, and sexualities. We need to recognise this as a strength and invitation, rather than a box-ticking, encouraging companies to find an accurate representation of who is in the community, and therefore who should be on screen, stage, and in the audience. Diversity should not be seen as a separate pillar - it is central to every aspect of the arts.
- There are people already doing this work, particularly in Western Sydney.
- To echo TNA’s submission:
 - we call for the centring of First Nations, Deaf and disabled artists, and artists of colour in every pillar and sub-strategy of the policy, with a dedicated, funded and measurable action plan to address the under-representation of these artists in decision making and leadership roles, including at the Australia Council.
 - A Federal grants program to allow schools to engage artists and arts organisations (using the Sporting Schools model) could include strategies to resource youth arts organisations to connect with schools to provide quality arts programs and professional learning for staff. Under the Australian Curriculum, students from Foundation to Year 6 are expected to engage with five artforms. However, schools and their staff, particularly those in regional and remote areas, often lack the skills, capacity and/or resources to deliver on the curriculum.

Strong Institutions

- It’s imperative that we 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

- We must also 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
- Alongside this there should be established 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.
- TNA's 2019 Salary Survey gave an analysis of 32 small to medium arts org respondents currently funded as FYFOs shows a core staff average of 5.26 equivalent full-time.
- We encourage an examination and challenging of what 'excellence' is – CACD based organisations provide excellence in different ways and should be funded to ensure the cultural maintenance of communities. Incentivising public art and engagement with artists, embedding arts and artists into businesses.
- Providing support for diversifying access and uses of public spaces for cultural activities and encouraging collaboration across industries so that art is more integrated with other aspects of society.
- Many arts workers enter their jobs as practicing artists rather than as businesspeople. There is missed training in these areas that affect many small-to-medium arts orgs, resulting sometimes in unintentionally harmful practices. There should be more opportunities for the Australia Council to provide connected funding -grants that are supported with relationships that create connections and access to advice. This could include support around creating, training in, and maintaining meaningful and used policies and procedures around:
 - Engaging with First Nations, CALD, d/Deaf and disabled artists, arts workers and audiences,
 - Safe work policies,
 - governance
 - crisis management

- Increase amount of four-year funding available for small-to-medium arts organisations.
- 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).

The Centrality of the Artist

- According to the Australia Council's 2021 research reports, in the Arts, 81% of workers are freelancers, or are self-employed and rely on contracts (43%) and royalties and advances (35%). Average incomes remain below the poverty line.
- Funding available for independent artists should be increased, so that emerging artists have access to their own funding streams.
 - This funding should use appropriate and accessible language to allow for artists with English as an additional language more equitable access.
 - It should also have achievable requirements for their stage of career development.
 - It should also be available year-round, as many independent artists, particularly emerging artists are responding to opportunities as they arise, rather than being able to plan a year in advance.
- Create a Universal Basic Income to allow independent artists and arts workers better access to resources that orgs have such as:
 - A workspace (office and rehearsal)
 - Stationery, computers
 - Shared knowledge and resources, infrastructure eg marketing
 - Insurance
 - Industry community events outside of projects
 - Sick leave
- Create Industrial reform that gives the Fair Work Commission powers to set minimum standards for artists and art workers and the scope and flexibility the Fair Work Commission needs to deal with "employee-like" forms of work

- Extend the small claims jurisdiction in the Fair Work Division of the Court to assist artists to resolve disputes without recourse to costly legal proceedings
- Centrelink to recognise art as a profession and adopt income averaging in ways that this type of income is handled by the ATO under the Tax Ruling: carrying on business as a professional artist. This recognition should be harmonised across ATO.

Reaching the Audience

- Fund and engage schools and artists to embed appreciation, normalisation, access to and feeling of belonging in the arts from an early age.
Include:
 - Artists in residence programs
 - Incursion and excursion support
 - Teachers PD and support
- Support for mainstream as well as smaller media outlets to cover the arts, normalising and encouraging engagement and understanding as much as there is for sport. This will create more audiences and increase the perceived value of the arts in the wider community.
- A government policy protecting and reserving a large percentage of Australian made arts content across TV, radio, newspapers etc.
- Re-establish the National Arts and Culture Accord to facilitate cooperation between three levels of government
- Commercial lease subsidies, tax incentives for landlords and planning reform to support pop-up spaces and small galleries for artists to show work and reach new audiences
- Support development, delivery, and promotion of arts trails to attract local visitors and tourists