

# National Cultural Policy Submission

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Submitted: As an individual

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**

First nations people, voices, knowledge and art need to be central to any forward thinking future cultural policy as a matter of urgency and education for our nation. Cultural action will enable healing, innovation and growth in ways we have never seen in this settler colony. This is long overdue.

## **A Place for Every Story**

This is about cultural and social renewal, and cultural imagination and action, as stories bind us and define us in all spheres of life, as they have done for generations. Supporting cultural workers, teaching artists and arts educators in these endeavours is key to having a future for this policy and for having a policy that works. It is critical now and also immanent, the way these pillars need to sustain us. This is about futuring. Not only is it important to make space for all kinds of voices that exist in our community, but the critical mass we desperately need to target in our cultural endeavours is the young. We have experienced so many years of wasted political jousting around curriculum and in particular, arts education provision, so that what we see now is a wasteland of vested interests denying our children of the right to an adequate education in the arts, despite overwhelming evidence of the impacts of arts education on young people's well-being, learning achievement, social connections, creative education and literacy. Australia has produced world-leading research in these areas and yet there has been silence, systemic ignorance and an impoverished approach to the arts in all spheres - schools, in educational authorities and also in teacher education. We deny our teachers adequate training in preservice contexts

but also in supporting them to be competent and creative educators when they are in service. Currently, universities struggle to adequately provide the time and facilities to teach the arts, for both neophyte artists and also for arts educators (both generalist and specialist teachers). Recently Covid was used as a mandate for universities to axe and reduce the offerings in the arts, which will, in turn, have impacts on teacher education and also young people's access to the arts. This needs urgent government action and intervention across the country. In recent years we have seen this country characterised as one that does not value culture, or the arts, nor one that supports the next generations of artists and arts education innovators. Indeed, even getting an arts degree has been made ridiculously expensive, this needs to be reversed for any growth in the future. We need artists and the building of artistic capacities now and in the future. All societies need artists. For this reason, a commitment to arts education at all levels needs to be foundational to these pillars. If we are to consider a vibrant and creative future, deeper support needs to be given to arts education, as a focal point for social and cultural change and development. Here is a bold suggestion backed up by a mountain of local and international research...make quality arts education a core entitlement for all Australian children and young people. The research tells us that the benefits and outcomes will be far reaching and profound. Young people and educators need to be recognised as key stakeholders in any cultural policy making process.