

National Cultural Policy Submission

Alyssa Allet

Dear Tony Burke,

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this consultation process for the development of a new National Cultural Policy.

As a young artist, actively working in, studying, and engaging with the arts, I believe there is an urgent need for greater action to be taken to ensure the diverse art and practices of current and future Australian artists are more effectively recognised and supported.

98% of Australians engage with the arts as creators and audience members, and approximately 53,200 Australians (30% of the workforce) are employed in the Creative and Performing arts sector, demonstrating how foundational the arts are to our Australian identity.

In this letter, I will discuss the achievement rate of pillars 2 and 3 from the previous policy, relying on credible data and my lived experience to identify gaps in their implementation and provide ideas of ways we can work towards greater progress.

A Place for Every Story

More spaces need to be created for a greater diversity of Australian creators to be recognised and given opportunities to share their stories.

Statistics on Female and Culturally Diverse artists

- Women occupy 51% of the workforce over all industries.
- 27.6% of Australians having been born overseas, and 48.2% with a parent born overseas.
- Of all Australian composers with work performed in the classical music sector in 2020, 16% were female and 15% were CALD Australians.
- 25% of Australian art collection is by female artists.
- 27% of works acquired by the National Gallery between 2014 and 2018 were by female artists.
- Though more female artists applied for financial support between 2010 and 2015 (at 62% compared to 48%), fewer females were successful (66% compared to 68%).
- People of a non-English speaking background account for 10% of artists compared to 18% of Australia's workforce.
- 63% of organisations in the performing arts sector had not CALD employees at leadership level in 2018.
- In 2017, 23% of funding applications were submitted by CALD individuals. On 29% of those were successful.

As a female with internationally born parents, it is rare that I come across others like myself in the industry. In almost all songwriting sessions I've been in over the past two years of being signed to a major Australian music publishing label, and at most

multi-artist gigs I've been a part of over the past 7 years, I have either been the only woman, the only person of colour, or both, represented. This is not a unique or unusual experience in the creative industry, particularly for female and/or culturally diverse artists. As seen above, many of our creative and cultural workspaces are not creating enough space for every story to be shared.

However, for there to even be a place for every story to be heard in the industry, we as Australians must first be interested in our own stories.

As a member of the most highly engaged consumer demographic of the arts in Australia, majority of the content I am exposed to is made overseas. By giving international art such a precedence over Australian work, diverse voices in the arts will have no chance to share their stories.

Statistics of Australian Art and Content

- Under 10% of works performed in Australia's classical music sector were written by Australian composers.
- 12 out of 108 music artists featured in the ARIA Top 100 Singles for 2021 were Australian.
- 3.3% of Netflix Australia's catalogue is estimated to be Australian content.
- Not one Australian artists' song is in the top 20 most played on the radio in 2022.

- “Fangirls The Musical” will be the only Australian-written theatre show in 2022 across Sydney and Melbourne.

Ideas that could contribute to progress:

- Create more programs that give a variety of Australian artists a place to work and develop their skills (APRA AMCOS is a significant example of an organisation who creates effective, inclusive programs for songwriters).
- Ensure all schools provide education in the arts.
- Offer funding opportunities for specific communities in Australia.
- Create means for Australian arts workers to be made more aware of the impacts of discrimination and the importance of diversity in the arts sector.
- Ensure more local and diverse artists are promoted and given more arts related opportunities.
- Put policies in place that ensure all Australian organisations engage with Australian art at a higher percentage rate.
- Create ways for Australian content to be more easily accessible.
- Create initiatives that give organisations incentive to prioritise Australian art.

The Centrality of the Artist

More needs to be done to practically support artists as workers.

Statistics on Artists as Workers

- 72% of artists (at all career stages) still engaged in training, demonstrating a willingness for lifelong learning.
- Artists work a total average of 45 hours per week.
- 81% of artists work on a freelance or self-employed basis in their primary occupation.
- Approximately 57% of artists' working time is spent on creative work that only generates 39% income.
- The average total annual income for artists is \$48,400 (21% below the workforce average).
- About 51% of all artists rely on income from work outside of the arts (inevitably decreasing earnings from artistic work). Of this, 83% earn income through utilising skills developed through artistic practice.

Work in the arts seems to be commonly perceived as a 'hobby', but the points above tell a very different story. Artists are proven to be highly educated individuals who are dedicated to their profession, and they need to be, to tolerate the working conditions and financial hardships of working in the arts.

Ideas that could contribute to progress:

- Continue providing funding opportunities for artists.
- Put policies in place to ensure organisations are subject to internal peer review, and external review from industry professionals and audience members.
- Provide tools to help inform artists about the changing industry climate.
- Implement initiatives that allow artists and government to work together to legitimise arts work in Australia.
- Create opportunities for artists to network with people within and outside the arts sector, to possibly find work.

In summary, I believe the two pillars discussed in my submission remain extremely important. Though they are not being achieved currently, as seen through research and my experience in regard to female and culturally diverse artists, Australian art and content, and artists as worker in the workforce, I am hopeful that we will see greater change, in light of the new policy.

Thank you for the chance to contribute to this process and for all your important work in the arts. I look forward to the outcome.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Allet

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