

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## Anonymous

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

**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

Supporting Young People from First Nations to share and see stories about their culture and that these stories become central to the National Cultural policy.

Supporting Young People from First Nations to participate in the Performing Arts as artists from an early age and remove the cost barrier.

Supporting Young People from First Nations to explore a career in the Performing Arts.

We refer to and endorse the submission from the First Nations performing arts sector: Marrugeku, Ilbijerri, Yirra Yaakin, Moogahlin, BlakDance and NAISDA.

### A Place for Every Story

'A place for every story' must include children and young people, who deserve opportunities to tell their stories and see themselves reflected in our culture.

We need stronger youth arts institutions to support children and young people as artists and creators of culture, to create work that engages and appeals to them as audiences, and to improve mental wellbeing.

'Young People's Engagement with the Arts' must be a priority of the National Cultural Plan, recognising the value of young people as a discerning audience and artists and participants in culture - their globally recognised rights as cultural citizens.

A Federal grants program to allow schools to engage artists and arts organisations (using the Sporting Schools model) could provide quality arts programs and professional learning for teaching 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.

### The Centrality of the Artist

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 call for the arts to be recognised as a profession by government. This entails changes to what is recognised by Centrelink as 'seeking employment', and the adoption of an annual

averaging process for artists' fluctuating income as is done by the ATO. There is also an opportunity to encourage employers to put artists onto payroll instead of contracts, as this ensures artists receive superannuation and are covered under WorkCover. This could be a requirement or a target for funded organisations to meet.

Raise the cap on project grants – projects of scale can be made by independents as much as by companies. This will help artists continue as independents and not be forced to set up as a company, just to access bigger grants.

Increase the pool of funding available to companies focused on young people and independent artists through the Australia Council's grants program. Where new funding programs such as RISE become available for individuals to apply to, ensure that the communication about that is crystal clear.

### **Strong Institutions**

Support young people to engage with the performing arts and make this possible by increasing the funding to more performing arts training organisations (like the National Theatre Melbourne).

Create jobs and rebuild the crucial infrastructure of the arts industry. There is currently no pathway for emerging companies. Investing in growth of this sector could create between 350 and 520 new permanent jobs and hundreds of casual and freelance roles.

### **Reaching the Audience**

Establish targeted, cross-department streams for funding Young People's Engagement in the Arts with: Health and Mental Health, Employment, Youth Justice, Regional Youth and Education – co-managed by the Australia Council.

Acknowledging how organisations that focus on the performing arts for Young People (like the National Theatre Melbourne) contribute to Australia's national and international profile.

Children and young people make up almost a third of Australia's population, and young people's engagement in arts and culture is a profound public good that requires a government framework to support long-term investment and outcomes.

*Young Australians are highly engaged – four in five attend arts events (83%), including live music (66%) and festivals (61%). One in two young Australians connect with their culture and community through arts and creativity (53%) and two in three creatively participate in the arts (66%).* (Australia Council 2020 National Arts Participation survey).

There is an opportunity for a key pillar of this policy to address the cultural, social, health, and educational needs of our younger generations through existing assets, skills and knowledge within the arts and cultural sectors.

Recommendations:

1. Provide an investment of \$15 million per year for four years from 2023 – 2026 to engage young Australians in arts and cultural activities.
2. Include “Young People's Engagement” as a priority of the Framework with young people's arts being included into whole of government approaches to learning, wellbeing, mental health, employment, resilience and artistic excellence.
3. Re-establish dedicated funding for young people's arts and investment in companies and artists whose core business is young people's engagement, sufficient to allow growth and enhanced impact.

4. Establish a separate stream of funding for young people's engagement and participation to be made available to other portfolios including Health and Employment – co-managed by the Australia Council.
5. Establish young people's advisory committees that reflect the diversity of young Australians, as an ongoing standing committee for the Australia Council for the Arts and the Minister for the Arts, ensuring young Australians have a direct voice to the decision makers impacting their lives.

**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 objectives should be in each and every pillar, not siloed.

#### **A Place for Every Story**

Create a *Young People and Culture Framework* as a new pillar or focus area.

Young people have suffered so much these past few years; we must support the future generations.

#### **The Centrality of the Artist**

Value the artists and all the people and their skillsets to help them be the best they can be for audiences.

#### **Strong Institutions**

There is an urgent need to rebuild morale and wellbeing within the arts industry. The past three years have caused us to curtail our ambitions, to retreat to survival mode, to plan only for six months ahead

#### **Reaching the Audience**

Improve the digital capabilities. This is important to stay relevant and continue to reach audiences as wide as possible.

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

We believe that the Policy should guide the more comprehensive development of a ten-year National Cultural Plan which will work cross-portfolio to leverage and invest in the civic benefits of arts and cultural programs.

Using some of the ideas from A New Approach's work, ensure that real mechanisms are designed to broker cross-portfolio connections, not just at a Ministerial level, but at a bureaucratic level (e.g. roundtables), across peak organisations from different areas (lead by the arts), and across sector organisations and individuals (e.g. through summits on particular topics such as young people's wellbeing).