

National Cultural Policy Submission

Geelong Gallery

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

There is enormous potential for small to medium scale organisations, especially regional art museums and spaces working in communities with strong connection to and activities on traditionally owned Country, to support the growth and professional development of a new generation of First Nations arts workers, including curators, exhibition managers, educators and commercial operations. Many regional centres, including Geelong Gallery, have active, collaboratively developed policies pertaining to First Nations Cultural Protocols, and robust, active Equity Action Plans. Funding and infrastructural support is needed for the regional sector to further design and implement this vital cultural development work.

A Place for Every Story

Art museums/galleries are not for all people, but at Geelong Gallery we hope that there is something for everyone in the collection or on display. Regional galleries are ever aware of the social diversity and local histories of the communities they serve, and work to reflect that in programming and engagement. Geelong Gallery has over the past five years especially embedded the stories of First Nations, migrants and asylum seekers, and people living with disability into exhibition and public programming. Further, our reach has extended to the formation Youth Ambassador and Youth Council training and social development programs to ensure young people can develop and use a strong cultural voice. Targeted funding for these initiatives and collaborations is vital for galleries and museums to support diverse voices and stories.

The Centrality of the Artist

We continually reflect that artists are the art museum's key constituents: no artists, no art museum. We routinely place the artist at the centre of our planning, and have a strong commitment to moral rights and fee structures. It is, however, a major financial commitment for NFP and small to medium scale galleries.

Strong Institutions

The National Cultural Policy might consider its alignments with other key policies that drive State creative industries and cultural policy frameworks and implementations – like Victoria’s ‘Creative State 2025’ – to ensure consolidation and complementarity. The small to medium scale art gallery sector needs careful, focussed and sustained support. It is hackneyed to state that many regional galleries and art spaces ‘punch above their weight’ but they do because they operate in areas of social and economic change, like Geelong. And they do so because they are generally run by highly trained professionals – many paid a pittance for huge responsibility and weight of community and government expectation. There is a vocational commitment at many levels throughout the art museum profession that a cultural policy needs to meaningfully celebrate and acknowledge through the application and allocation of appropriate levels of funding for core business and institutional prosperity.