

National Cultural Policy Submission

South Australian Country Women's Association Strathalbyn

Submitted: on behalf A not for profit organisation

The SACWA Strathalbyn Combined Branch is a part of the broader South Australian Country Women's Association (SACWA). The SACWA has been serving the community since 1929. The organisation is not for profit, non-party political and non-sectarian. The aim of the organisation is to promote the welfare and conditions of life for women and children of all ages, whether in the city or country.

It is a voluntary organisation with the slogan 'Sharing and Caring With Action', giving of our time, efforts and finances to ensure that what is important to our communities (culturally, socially, environmentally and economically) is preserved and grown.

From the perspective of our Branch the SACWA Strathalbyn Combined Branch, a National Cultural Policy is an important step to ensure that the cultural life of all communities is valued and supported. Here are some thoughts:

- A National Cultural policy is for all citizens not only for artists.
- Community and the people that make them must be at the centre of all arts and cultural policy and the ways that it is enacted.
- Communities are diverse. The expression of that diversity and telling our stories is a fundamental and powerful human right.
- It is vital to support the ability for all people and communities to express themselves through arts, culture and the power of storytelling.
- We must use the stories of all the people in communities to imagine a different future that embraces beauty and hope.
- We urge us all to consider the carbon footprint of the arts as with all areas of life.
- It is important to support communities through access to quality professional arts experiences as well as the opportunities to be personally involved in creating arts and culture be it preserving traditional crafts and sustainable home practices or learning and sharing new skills.

Culturally being a member of an organisation such as the SACWA provides other cultural elements such as:

- a sense of belonging and feeling like a part of the community
- being connected to each other and the place in which we live
- participating and contributing to the community
- having the capacity to share ideas in new ways

- providing a sense of enrichment through positive emotion, personal development and fulfilment.
- being actively involved in the community and contributing to local decision making
- upholding traditions that are important to the community
- building skills to ensure the community is resilient and can constructively respond and adapt to change.

These elements of culture generate community wellbeing. This is vitally important when the levels of mental illness are increasing across all communities, including regional Australia.

As individuals and as a group, the SACWA Strathalbyn Combined Branch participate in the arts. We know the power of the arts. We support the use of the arts to bring the community together and encourage consideration of local, amateur arts organisations in the National Cultural Policy alongside professional practice and works of excellence. Whether it is the local civic band, the amateur theatre group, the regional gallery, organisations all run by volunteers, these arts activities contribute not only to the wellbeing of the community involved and their audiences, but also to the local economy.

Ensuring that all communities have access to facilities and places to engage in the arts, to experience the doing themselves as well as being an audience member is vitally important.

Grass roots organisations such as the Country Women's Association branches across Australia are valued as one of the many holders and creators of local stories and culture. SACWA Strathalbyn Branch support the development of the National Cultural Policy and encourage the inclusion of the broad definition of culture to be included in the policy and the action plans and funding that are derived from it.

Please attribute this submission to South Australian Country Women's Association – Strathalbyn Combined Branch

I give permission for this submission to be published on line.

Publish under SACWA- Strathalbyn Combined.