National Cultural Policy Submission Template

We have provided a list of optional questions to help guide your input.

# Are you submitting this submission (select all that apply)?

On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

On behalf of an arts peak body

On behalf of a for-profit arts business

On behalf of an organisation with arts-components (e.g., community organisation, tourism, venue, health, education etc)

On behalf of government or government body

As a worker/professional in an industry who uses arts (e.g., art therapist, tour guide)

As an artist

As an individual

The original 5 goals of the [2013 Creative Australia National Cultural Policy](https://www.arts.gov.au/documents/creative-australia-national-cultural-policy) were:

Recognise, respect and celebrate the centrality of First Nations cultures to the uniqueness of Australian identity.

Ensure that government support reflects the diversity of Australia.

Support excellence and the special role of artists and their creative collaborators.

Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector to contribute to national life, community wellbeing and the economy.

Ensure Australian creativity thrives here and abroad in the digitally enabled 21st century.

For the purposes of the consultation we have distilled these into 5 pillars:

* First Nations
* A Place for Every Story
* Centrality of the Artist
* Strong Institutions
* Reaching the Audience.

## Reaching the Audience

**Soft Power and the creative industries**

Australian culture – the expression of our people, values and lifestyle, is one of our best soft power assets. However culture is currently underused in Australia’s soft power agenda.

An integrated approach between culture and foreign affairs policy gives us the opportunity to move away from a narrow, export driven soft power agenda and move towards a more expansive approach that prioritises reciprocity, skills exchange and leveraging local voices. Collaboration, exchange and reciprocity shows Australia as a sophisticated power in the Indo-Pacific region.

Let’s use this time to finally invest in an integrated cultural diplomacy that can contribute more generously to building trust, goodwill and positive top of mind perceptions.

Let’s ensure our small to medium arts sector comes out of the COVID crisis thriving. These small and nimble operators can adapt to the new global environment quickly and will likely move faster to represent us in the region than the larger heritage organisations who may be slower and face greater challenges to re-engaging with international activity due to their scale.

We will need to work harder to leverage our huge soft power resource at home - our international students. International students and young diaspora populations are in a constant digital dialogue with their regional networks, and often return home as influencers and tastemakers. How can we welcome them more into the cultural life of our cities, engage them better in domestic tourism, recruit them as ambassadors for our local music industry? Their success is our success.

Let’s also consider opportunities for training. Can we build more skills sharing with our regional neighbours? Sharing knowledge in areas such as event management, technical training and local content creation will bring us goodwill, and deliver us important regional allies in the longer term.

**Challenge:** **There is no long term strategy or mechanism for long term collaboration and co-ordination between DFAT and the creative industries.**

DFAT and the creative industries do not speak the same language. The creative industries do not know how DFAT works, nor understand the national interest context. Busy diplomats do not have the time or interest to become cultural specialists.

In the absence of a committed agency coordinating efforts the creative industry, Australia Council for the Arts, state agencies and DFAT all operate in silos with different agendas.

**Opportunity:** **Create an independent, nimble agency to provide specialist advice and act as a broker between various levels of government and the creative industry sector**

An agile brokering body of cultural experts working closely with DFAT, DOCA and the creative sector would be a game-changer for Australia’s soft power.

A brokering body with an understanding of public diplomacy goals can identify, grow and coordinate grow soft power assets where the state does not have direct control. It can spearhead projects and programs that benefit both the creative sector and the national interest. An agency of this style could be co-funded by DFAT, DOCA and philanthropists such as the Myer Foundation / Playking Foundation who have long term interest in this space.

**Challenge:** **Government does not have high profile cultural expertise that is able to provide advice and advocate for soft power across government.**

**Opportunity:** **Create a Soft Power Advisory Group**

This group would be a panel of high profile experts can provide advice to government and advocate for for cultural diplomacy across government.

**Challenge: There is no funding mechanism for large-scale intercultural productions.**

Intercultural collaborations are some of our most powerful works of art and an essential tool for soft power. However they are extremely challenging to resource due to the lack of funding for large scale work that involves artists from overseas.

**Opportunity:** **Using the MFI (Major Festivals Initiative) as a model, create a new commissioning fund for large-scale intercultural commissions.**

This commissioning fund could fill the current gap in funding large-scale work that involves overseas artists. This fund would also encourage Australian companies to make ambitious plans with overseas collaborators, in particular those from less resourced, but strategically important, funding contexts (ie collaborators from SouthEast Asia, India etc). A commissioning fund would also encourage Australian festivals to more pro-actively seek intercultural collaborations for their programs.

**Challenge:** **International students – and Chinese speaking students in particular- are a significantly under-engaged arts audience.**

Turning World’s *520 Melbourne Report : Engaging Chinese-speaking International Students in Melbourne’s Arts and Cultural Sector[[1]](#footnote-2)* confirmed that 58% of Chinese-speaking international students are enthusiastic to attend more cultural events but don’t hear about them. 66% of the cohort are not engaging with any Australian media at all, with 97% of the audience engaging with Chinese social media platform WeChat every day.

Nuturing this audience makes undeniable cultural, economic and political sense.

**Opportunity:** **Establish an annual Asia Pop festival to welcome international students to Australia at the beginning of the semester.**

In 2017 Turning World collaborated with Imagikai and Asia TOPA to create the successful *Asia Pop Fest* at Sidney Myer Music Bowl. Celebrating all things Asian pop, acts included K-Pop superstars and a Chinese TV pop star. Attended by 6000+ international students and their friends it was a smash hit IRL and on social media. The planned return of the event in March 2020 was cancelled due to COVID.

This event could be a template for a national event. It would engage international students in the cultural life of Australia, build literacy for the creative industries in engaging this audience long term and support Australia’s education sector to provide meaningful experiences for students choosing to study in Australia.

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**Please send your completed submission to** [**culturalpolicy@arts.gov.au**](mailto:culturalpolicy@arts.gov.au) **or upload it to** [**the short form via our website**](http://www.arts.gov.au/culturalpolicy)**.**

1. https://turningworld.com.au/wp-content/uploads/520-Melbourne-Report-Snapshot.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)