

## DIVERSITY ARTS AUSTRALIA RECOMMENDATIONS:

### Towards the State's first Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy

#### 1. A new look at people: How can we create better, more inclusive, support and pathways for practitioners in the arts, culture and creative industries?

- Support **increased employment opportunities and pathways for culturally diverse creatives, artists and workers**. This will help shift the balance, noting Diversity Arts Australia's 2019 *Shifting the Balance* report findings that CaLD<sup>1</sup> Australians were under-represented across every leadership role in every cultural sector, organisational type and jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup>
- Introduce **diversity quotas and progress targets tied to State Government funding**. This will support increased cultural diversity and equity in decision-making roles in the sector, growing a sector that reflects the intersectional diversity of contemporary NSW.
- Provide **long-term, targeted professional development resources** to build leadership capabilities and pathways for CaRM creatives.
- Invest in building the **capability and accountability of state-funded arts institutions to practise anti-racism and evolve cultural safety** in the work they do and how they do it. This requires **ongoing education and action in the NSW creative sector context**. Creative Victoria has shown leadership in this area, introducing a suite of equity and inclusion programs focused on capability-development for culturally diverse creatives and collectives, and for Victoria's major arts companies. Diversity Arts has played a delivery partner role for Creative Victoria, delivering the Fair Play Equity and Inclusion program.

#### 2. A new look at infrastructure: How can we create and improve sustainable access to spaces, programs and other support for all aspects of artistic and cultural activity?

- **Invest in the operational infrastructure of community and small to medium arts organisations focused on driving systemic diversity and equity**, valuing their experience and expertise. These are the spaces where marginalised artists and arts practices are welcomed and assisted with supportive pathways into the arts, screen and creative sectors.
- **Ensure equitable distribution of funding for arts and culture**. Investment criteria must take into account the entirety of the cultural ecosystem to ensure that financing is equitably distributed over

<sup>1</sup> Diversity Arts Australia, *Shifting the Balance Report* (2019) <http://diversityarts.org.au/app/uploads/Shifting-the-Balance-DARTS-small.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/MNSW\\_Settlement-Strategy.pdf](https://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/MNSW_Settlement-Strategy.pdf)

- a larger network of grassroots, CaRM community groups and agencies, and local organisations, resulting in a culturally responsive, robust, and diverse local cultural ecosystem in NSW. Disparities in funding are starkly apparent in Western Sydney - home to one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the nation and representing 50% of the Sydney population, yet receiving less than 10% of state funding across various programs awarded by Create NSW in 2021-2022.
- **Invest in regional NSW and Western Sydney community-led** cultural infrastructure and culturally responsive programs, where settlement hubs have seen multicultural communities - particularly refugee communities – grow across the state.<sup>3</sup>
- **Invest in strong systems for collaborative research** with artists, arts organisations and universities, into the state of the arts and culture sector in NSW, including direct and indirect impacts of this new policy on the creative sector. This will support the NSW government, and the sector as a whole, with robust evidence to inform continuous policy and program development and respond to evolving issues.
- **Increase accessibility of venues** for performance, rehearsals, artist studios and related facilities in Western Sydney and regional NSW.

### 3. A new look at audiences: How can we grow local, national and international audiences for cultural experiences, for the benefit of our community and the broader economy?

The 2021 Australian census indicated that 51.5% of Australian residents have one or both parents born overseas; and 5.5 million Australians speak a language other than English at home - 24.8% of the population. Australia Council research found that culturally diverse people are more engaged as audiences and consumers in the arts, screen and creative sectors, however they are underrepresented when it comes to most mainstream and public-funded cultural and arts organisations. Proposed ways to grow audiences in this context, include:

- **Target investment in geographically and socioeconomically marginalised areas:** Provide place-based support, targeted towards artists and small organisations producing creative work in locations across the State with higher underrepresented migrant populations such as Western Sydney.
- **Invest in global audiences and transnational connections:** People with migrant backgrounds and multi-ethnic/national identities have capacities to connect with global and diasporic markets. Invest

<sup>3</sup> Our use of the term “culturally and linguistically diverse” is inclusive of people who are first, second or third generation migrants or members of ethnic communities. This includes Australia-born people who may self-identify or engage with the languages, customs or cultural specificities of ancestral heritages that differ from those of Anglo-Celtic Australians. This also includes people from refugee backgrounds and people seeking asylum on temporary visas. However, we recognise the limitations of this term, including that people tend not to identify as “culturally and linguistically diverse” (CaLD). A new term is “Culturally and Racially Marginalised” (recently used by bodies like Creative Australia; Diversity Council Australia) and “Culturally and Linguistically Marginalised” (coined by Professor Karen Soldatic, Western Sydney University, 2023). While not used in this submission, Diversity Arts has also started using the term “Culturally, Linguistically and Racially Marginalised” (CLaRM).

in these highly networked communities and draw on NSW migrant communities' knowledge to strengthen inter-cultural understanding and engagement.

- **Invest in multilingual arts and creative work**, recognising the more than 300 languages spoken in the state.
- **Measure and report on the diversity of audiences:** Major arts, screen and cultural organisations funded by the state of NSW, for the people of NSW, must be held accountable for ensuring accessibility of, and engagement with, the diverse communities they serve. This could be achieved with a requirement to measure and report on the diversity of their audiences annually.

#### 4. Where should the NSW Government focus the greatest effort and resources?

##### (a) First Nations First

We recognise that our advocacy and policy success is dependent on the needs of First Nations artists and arts organisations being met, and we support the submissions made by First Nations artists, creative workers and organisations and in particular those of Aboriginal Arts Alliance (NSW). As a peak organisation, Diversity Arts recognises our presence as settlers and advocate for the prioritisation of funding and support for First Nations communities in the form of:

- **Support First Nations-led employment pathways** in the creative sector to address the underrepresentation of First Nations creatives.
- **Targeted investment in First Nations arts sectors** that moves beyond simply recognising and celebrating to sustainable, self-determined, generative support.
- **Platforming First Nations artists and creative workers.** Create processes and settings for artists and performers who are not employees of organisations to have their voices and needs foregrounded.
- **First Nations procurement and ethical creative control.** The sector requires procurement policies and practices seeking work from First Nations artists and creative workers that prioritise ethical Indigenous creative control while providing state-wide economic opportunities to First Nations businesses.
- **Establish a state-wide First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy and Fund** to assist First Nations emerging arts and cultural organisations across regional and metropolitan NSW with operational costs, business development, and specialised professional development and training programs.

##### (b) Invest in sustaining place-based community arts organisations and invest in the small to medium arts and creative sector.

- **Invest in localised, small-medium arts, screen and creative organisations** led by people from culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds. Such organisations provide brokerage, connection, support, and pathways to employment and skills development for CaRM and migrant artists and creative workers.

- **Hold recipients of public funding accountable** for the diversity of their workforce, leaders, procurement of artistic projects and programming - with strong measures and accountabilities for cultural and racial equity to ensure their relevance and sustainability.

## 5. What barriers can the NSW Government remove to unlock the full potential of arts, culture, and the creative industries?

Combating racism and building cultural safety across the sector is fundamental to dismantling structural barriers that limit access and opportunity for CaRM artists, arts workers and audiences.

- **Devolved funding programs to support CaRM artists and groups.** Provide grant funds to smaller arts organisations with wide networks across the sector and community, for distribution to CaRM artists and communities for place-based arts and culture activities. Many migrant and CaRM artists and creatives lack access to funding structures, leading to lower levels of applications from these communities to bodies like Create NSW. To address this, application processes should include translations in the six main non-English languages spoken in NSW, enhancing accessibility. Additionally, providing targeted support to artists from historically excluded communities in

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navigating State and other funding systems is crucial. Establishing a fund linked to a dedicated program would effectively address these challenges.

- **Improve accessibility to grants and grant writing capacity building for underrepresented CaRM creatives.** As noted in the previous point, for newly arrived migrants and people whose first language is not English, grant application systems and processes pose significant barriers to participation, effectively excluding these cohorts from creative sector funding opportunities. To ensure funding is equitably distributed, provide support in preparing grant applications (e.g. longer lead times for grant applications, translation and interpretation services, and grant writing workshops facilitated by a network of agencies experienced in working with marginalised communities).
- **Designate positions to support employment of CaRM creatives.** Create designated industry roles, paid internships, and multicultural/cultural liaison roles for people from CaRM backgrounds.
- **Allocate resources to establish culturally diverse positions and networks that possess the expertise and specialised focus needed to support migrant, non-English speaking, and refugee creatives.** These dedicated arts/creative support roles are crucial to assist excluded creatives from CaRM backgrounds to access funding, employment, and connections in the creative sector.
- **Invest in sector-wide inclusion measurement** Support quantitative and qualitative research that explores the differential experiences of culturally diverse artists and creatives, documents their positions in the sector, and underscores accountability for patterns of exclusion of people from underrepresented backgrounds. This research must apply an intersectional lens to understanding

the nuances of different peoples' lived experience based on culture, ethnicity, residential status, language, class, gender and sexuality.

## 6. What's your big idea?

An industry-led anti-racism strategy, with practical actions to instigate systems-change. This would promote and safeguard ethno-cultural diversity and racial equity in the creative sector.

While we strongly support the Federal Government's Revive policy, A limitation is that it does not address the systemic issue of cultural and racial marginalisation within general 'CaLD' approaches to resourcing and support in the arts and culture sector. In particular, the need for pro-active, system-shifting actions to address structural inequities and effect racial justice, is missing from policy efforts to sustain and regenerate the arts, cultural and creative sectors into the future.

NSW has the chance to lead the way in crafting an industry-led anti-racism strategy, bolstered by focused investments. Such an initiative would align well with the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework and the impending Multicultural Framework Review by the Commonwealth Government, making the timing apt.

**Note:** We support the submission from the **NSW Cultural Peak Body Roundtable**, and **members:** Museums & Galleries NSW, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, Accessible Arts, Regional Arts NSW, NAVA, Arts Law, Arts on Tour, Ausdance NSW, History Council of NSW, MusicNSW, Theatre Network NSW, Royal Australian Historical Society, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Arts Association, Australian Plays Transform, Local Government NSW, Sydney Culture Network, Sydney University, Western Sydney University and Writing NSW.

Key initiatives should include:

- **Significant investment in self-determined programs for culturally and racially marginalised artists and creatives** offering pathways into the industry.
- **Multi-year projects** that elevate diverse voices, address community challenges and improve cultural safety in the sector across NSW.
- **Support for new and existing networks**, organisations and infrastructure for culturally and racially marginalised creatives and communities.
- **Targeted leadership, sponsorship and professional development opportunities** that support culturally and racially marginalised people in decision-making positions.
- **Employment pathways** at all levels, including for emerging, mid-career, and experienced creative workers. This includes internships, traineeships and leadership programs for the most underrepresented creative workers, including young people, newly arrived migrants and refugee communities.
- **Equity-based training and capacity-building programs for organisations/ institutions that support embedding cultural safety and accountability** into institutional policies, practices and governance at all levels across the NSW creative sector.
- **Incentivise large industry bodies, state-funded agencies and government departments to work with and support independent and small to medium arts organisations**, recognising the

relational experience and expertise of small, community-powered entities in the creative sector in providing supportive pathways for culturally diverse creatives into the arts, screen and creative sectors.

- **Initiate a ‘Health and wellbeing Impact Fund’** to support CaRM artists and creative workers who struggle to illuminate their work, survive and flourish in NSW’s arts and creative sector.

## About Diversity Arts Australia

- **DARTS is the leading NSW and national organisation for ethnocultural and migrant racial equity** in the arts, screen and creative sectors. We believe creative expression is a fundamental human right, which strengthens and connects communities.
  - **We acknowledge First Nations sovereignty and strive to build respectful, reflective and culturally safe relationships and practices that honour the First Peoples of this land.**
1. We pursue anti-racism, equity and inclusion work in the creative sector in a way that foregrounds First Nations communities, does not conflate First Nations and settler-migrant experiences of racism and exclusion, and supports First Nations-led initiatives and programs.
- **Based in Western Sydney**, DARTS develops innovative programs, platforms and research that imagines a more inclusive future for Australia’s creative sector. DARTS is led by culturally, linguistically and racially marginalised artists and cultural workers with skills and expertise spanning arts and creative production; media and journalism; digital production; diversity, equity and inclusion; advocacy; anti-racism practice; academia; education and training.
  - **While our focus is on cultural, linguistic and racial marginalisation**, our work happens at the **intersections** of many other lived experiences and systemic barriers to opportunity, including disability, race, gender, class, sexuality, age and geography and First Nations representation. Our work is always consciously evolving to develop practices that support and connect with marginalised artists, groups and communities, and build meaningful solidarity with First Nations communities.