

Review Panel
Multicultural Framework Review
Department of Home Affairs

13 October 2023

Dear Committee Secretary and Senate Standing Committees

Diversity Arts Australia Submission into the Multicultural Framework Review

Diversity Arts Australia, supported by 45 individuals and organisations (listed in an attachment to this document) are pleased to make this submission to the Multicultural Framework Review and commends the Federal Government for undertaking this important work.

About Diversity Arts Australia

Diversity Arts Australia is the peak national organisation promoting racial equity across the arts, cultural and screen sectors. Diversity Arts works to build a creative sector that reflects Australia's actual cultural diversity and believes creative expression is a fundamental human right, which strengthens and connects communities. We recognise 60,000 years of unbroken Indigenous sovereignty and are guided by the principles of First Nations First.

We work within an intersectional framework of race, gender diversity, class, disability, sexual orientation and age recognising that ethnocultural diversity cannot be viewed in isolation from other forms of systemic exclusion and marginalisation. We are committed to working in the service of cultural equity and our approach is underpinned by the principles of human rights. We believe that a truly diverse creative sector is fundamental to an inclusive and sustainable cultural democracy.

Diversity Arts combines service provision — resources, events, research, training — with creative production. We act as a broker between artists, industry, educators and government, and commission content from artists that articulates key issues and showcases best practice.

This submission is directly supported by over 45 organisations, groups and individuals from across the arts, screen and creative sectors nationally, all of which are listed at the end of this report. Research and roundtable discussions in the lead-up to writing this engaged around 100 people.

This submission is informed by our work with thousands of culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD), culturally and racially marginalised, migrant and refugee artists, and creative workers via our programs, talks, research, advocacy, and events. The submission is directly informed by:

- Our co-convened **Multicultural Framework Review Roundtable** with Creative Australia which brought together 25+ thought-leaders, creatives and cultural advocates to discuss priorities and opportunities for arts and culture in relation to Australia’s Multicultural Framework Review.
- Our collective advocacy via the **Creative Cultural Diversity Network** of 60+ arts workers and organisations working together for racial and cultural equity.
- Our 20+ year engagement with migrant and refugee artists who identify as culturally and racially marginalised (CaRM) and culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD).¹
- Our capacity-building and content production work with thousands of CaRM artists and creative workers.
- Our partnerships with a range of national peak and grass-roots arts, screen and creative sector organisations, ethno-specific groups and communities.
- Our leadership of sector-wide research and direction-setting publications such as the 2019 *Shifting the Balance* report².

Response to Multicultural Framework Review

Diversity Arts Australia welcomes the Multicultural Framework Review that **will make recommendations on matters that address barriers to inclusion as well as those that enhance the social, cultural and economic strengths provided by Australia’s multicultural diversity.**

In undertaking this significant rebuild of the nation’s cultural life, a meaningful action-based Multicultural Framework has an opportunity to prioritise artistic, employment and leadership opportunities, and cultural safety for people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) and Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CaRM) backgrounds in the creative sector.

Despite comprising around more than 40% of the population, research tells us people from CaLD backgrounds are underrepresented across all areas in the creative sector, from leadership to the stories

¹ 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).

² <https://diversityarts.org.au/app/uploads/Shifting-the-Balance-DARTS-small.pdf>

that get told. This is documented in reports such as Diversity Arts' Shifting the Balance, Media Diversity Australia's "Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories", Creative Australia's "Towards Equity" and Screen Australia's "Seeing Ourselves: Reflections on Diversity in Australian TV Drama".

We strongly recommend that specific actions are focused on increased employment opportunities for CaLD and culturally and racially marginalised peoples, including in positions of leadership and decision-making. It is also critical that the Review takes an intersectional approach.

Addressing racism must be a central concern. Racism is a public health issue and decades of research provide ample evidence how racism impacts heavily on life outcomes of racialised individuals and communities, especially on health and wellbeing, education and employment.

Diversity Arts' own research on the impacts of lost work during the pandemic revealed the compounding effects of the heightened racism experienced by Asian Australian individuals and communities.

Yet we also know that during the pandemic, arts and cultural work was critical in fostering trust, connection and wellbeing, building community, and for providing a space for community members to creatively express their collective visions.

Diversity Arts supports First Nations First as affirmed in the Government's 2023 National Cultural Policy - Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place, and the guiding principles across the five pillars, including safe and inclusive work cultures and representation among organisations and leadership. The second pillar, "A place for every story", especially speaks to the purpose of Diversity Arts Australia and the many small to medium arts and cultural organisations in the creative and community sectors that work with CaLD artists and communities to make space for every story.

A Note on Language

At DARTS, we often use different language to describe the communities who we represent - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD), Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CaRM), migrant, refugee and Person of Colour are all terminologies we have used in different contexts. **We have attached a Note on Language** to this submission, which we hope will assist this Multicultural Framework Review. We believe that it is important for language to be considered as part of this review.

DARTS is compelled by the potential of the term "culturally and racially marginalised" (CaRM). This terminology encourages a reckoning with the ongoing marginalisation of people who are not white, focusing on the systems of power and privilege which lead non-white communities to have less access to opportunities and resources. However, we also acknowledge the importance of self-determined language, which is at all times preferred when referring to people's identities.

MULTICULTURAL EQUITY IN THE CREATIVE SECTOR

“We must shift terminology from diversity and inclusion to multicultural equity. Diversity and inclusion has become a corporate plan – not a reckoning with social justice. First Nations first, racial equity, cultural rights, decolonisation are the principles, paths and present we imagine for ourselves. Social justice logic focuses on the structural changes required to address systems of oppression; equity focuses on the collective and community, not the individual. The struggle for multicultural equity is an intergenerational inheritance that speaks to power and injustice. We must decolonise multiculturalism if we are to commit to a meaningful future. This is a collective responsibility.” Dr Paula Abood, speaking at the Diversity Arts Australian and Creative Australia, Multicultural Framework Review Roundtable.

DIVERSITY ARTS AUSTRALIA RECOMMENDATIONS:

Below are the key recommendations that have been collated from our sector consultations and research.

- 1. Policy settings and programs.**
 - 1.1.** Implement **First Nations First principles** that inform and ethically guide policy and practice in non-Indigenous organisations.
 - 1.2.** **Uphold a multicultural democracy underpinned by social justice ethics** and the principles of human rights. This must be applied in all policies and programs.
 - 1.3.** **Adopt an intersectional approach** in developing policies and programs to ensure that they are inclusive of race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality, socio-economic status, and settlement histories.
 - 1.4.** **Prioritise support and funding for small to medium arts and cultural organisations,** who work more directly with CaLD/CaRM, migrant and refugee communities in the co-design of **culturally responsive programs.**
 - 1.5.** **Embed data collection and evaluation frameworks** in all programs to measure impacts and outcomes, providing evidence for the equitable allocation of public funding. Monitor, report on and evaluate the impact of actions and track changes in CaLD representation.
 - 1.6.** **Set diversity targets and standards** to increase representation in **decision-making and leadership roles** across creative sectors and industries nationally. All funding should be

tied to minimum Diversity Standards to achieve equitable CaLD/CaRM representation in the national cultural sector.

2. Strategies to promote multiculturalism, social cohesion and inclusion

2.1 First Nations First. We cannot promote multiculturalism without a commitment to supporting the principles of racial equity, self-determination and cultural rights for all First Nations communities. This must be articulated across all policies and embedded into program design.

2.2 Decolonise Multiculturalism. Reconfigure multiculturalism through the lens of social justice and cultural equity. This means focusing on dismantling systemic and structural barriers and foregrounding rights and anti-racism.³

2.3 Embed capacity-building programs in institutions and organisations to support ethical engagement of CaLD/CaRM communities and individuals. Impactful programs such as Diversity Arts' Fair Play included Equity Action Plans, cultural safety training, trauma informed practice and human rights based approaches. This program has build the multicultural capability of over 50 arts and creative industry bodies.

2.4 Prioritise Professional Development by creating more pathways to participate across all areas and levels of the arts and cultural sector, inclusive of emerging, mid-career and established CaLD/CaRM creatives. There is often an emphasis on early career and emerging CaLD/CaRM creatives, however, many creatives are experienced practitioners who cannot access equal opportunities (racism and ageism). This particularly affects older migrants and refugees. Successful programs such as INTERSECT (British Council and Diversity Arts) and Ripple (Accessible Arts NSW and Diversity Arts) have included **mentorships, internships, fellowships and leader programs**. We recommend the implementation of diversity standards (equity action plans) with clear measurable goals and outcomes.

³ Reference - Shifting the Balance Report

2.5 Allocate funding for public schools nationally, especially schools in lower socio-economic areas with high CaLD/CaRM populations so that all children have equitable access to and participation in creative translingual expression and development.

2.6 Barriers to further education, training and study: provide incentives and targeted scholarships for tertiary institutions to support CaLD/CaRM students from low socio-economic backgrounds access studies in the creative industries. Also increase targeted job training and employment pathways.

2.7 Address the absence of multiculturalism in REVIVE: Australia’s National Cultural Policy.

While vaguely implied through terminology like “every story”, multiculturalism must be explicitly mentioned, with clear strategies and actions to ensure the barriers to access and participation in cultural life are acknowledged and addressed.

3. How can the Federal Government more strategically communicate and engage multicultural Australia, including in languages other than English?

3.1 Use accessible language and communicate all key policies and programs in community languages other than English. We recommend the use of an easy-read format. We need to have mechanisms in place to support artists and creative workers from culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds who face barriers to access in terms of language and other systems navigation issues. Currently it is not widely known or advertised that some arts funding bodies provide translation and interpreting services, while others do not. There needs to be a coordinated approach to providing accessible and affordable translation and interpreting services. Furthermore, funding should be increased to enable organisations to use these services.

3.2 Provide grant/funding sessions in languages other than English. Also simplify the grants process to increase access. Information about grants and funding opportunities should be provided in a range of languages and formats to account for various forms of linguistic diversity.

It should be noted that the current system of funding is inaccessible, especially for newly arrived and emerging communities.

4. Create opportunities to define a modern shared Australian identity and strengthen public understanding of multiculturalism as a collective responsibility through education and public awareness raising.

4.1 Fund CaLD-led small to medium cultural organisations to create work that educates and strengthens public commitment to multiculturalism.

4.2 Embed an artist-in-residence in every primary school using creativity as a tool to educate and empower.

4.3 Create opportunities for intergenerational dialogues that are intersectional, intercommunal and intergenerational to connect histories of knowledge, experience, and practice.

5. Services Designed to support multicultural Australia. This includes addressing: federal diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies by promoting leadership roles for individuals from CaLD/CaRM backgrounds.

5.1 The arts and storytelling provide effective strategies to support multiculturalism across all areas from community services, to health, education to empowering young people.

5.2 Community arts and cultural development (CaCD) work must be resourced adequately to ensure that everyone is able to claim their right to participate in the cultural life of the community as stated in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

5.3 Provide platforms for CaLD advocacy organisations to come together and share their work. This would build communities of practice, and strengthen learning and sharing opportunities.

5.4 Foster greater collaboration between diasporic artists and international peers to enhance cultural exchange, build transnational audiences, and facilitate professional development.

6. Identifying areas for reform to address any systemic barriers

6.1 Redefine the idea of ‘excellence’ and the underlying assumptions of what culture is, which are predominantly articulated through the lens of whiteness or western forms of arts. As award-winning author Roanna Gonsalves observes, “The idea of artistic excellence is guarded and maintained as a white possession.”

6.2 Shift the burden of responsibility for multicultural equity away from CaLD/CaRM individuals, recognising that multiculturalism and diversity are collective responsibilities.

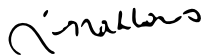
6.3 Identify and dismantle hidden barriers and elitist cultures within mainstream arts spaces, creating culturally safe environments through community-led engagement and culturally responsive programming. Provide training and education to institutions and tie funding to diversity standards and processes to influence change.

6.5 Establish diversity quotas for board composition, valuing not just academic credentials but also lived experiences and international qualifications, within culturally safe board environments.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input and recommendations for this important work. At Diversity Arts we believe we must anchor frameworks, policies, statements, and strategies in the language of rights with cultural rights being integral to building a consciously anti-racist, equitable and flourishing translingual creative nation.

I submit this on behalf of Diversity Arts Australia and also the many organisations and individuals who have asked to be included on this submission. Their names and details are attached to this document.

Yours sincerely,



Lena Nahlous

CEO, Diversity Arts Australia

info@diversityarts.org.au

Attachments:

1. Names of the Individuals and Organisations who have been asked to be added to this submission
2. A Note on Language

References:

Shifting the Balance Report: Cultural Diversity in Leadership in the Arts, Screen and Creative Sectors:

<https://diversityarts.org.au/app/uploads/Shifting-the-Balance-DARTS-small.pdf>

Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories

https://www.mediadiversityaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Who-Gets-to-Tell-Australian-Stories_2.0_FINAL_NAL_pdf.pdf

Lost Work 2.0 Report: The impacts of the pandemic on creatives of colour and First Nations creatives

<https://diversityarts.org.au/tools-resources/read-lost-work-for-creatives-of-colour-and-organisations-2-0>

The following individuals and organisations have confirmed their support for this submission:

1. Mariam Veiszadeh, CEO, Media Diversity Australia
2. Professor Nareen Young, Associate Dean (Indigenous Leadership & Engagement), UTS Business School, University of Technology Sydney
3. Kiriaki Zakinthinos, CEO, Curious Works
4. Professor Karen Soldatic, School of Social Sciences & Institute Fellow, Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University
5. Dr Jessica Olivieri, Artistic Director, Urban Theatre Project
6. Dr Bilquis Ghani, Leader, Hunar Symposia
7. Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa, Executive Director, The Blue Room Theatre, WA
8. Grace Akosua Williams, Director, Citizen Tasmania
9. Billy Kelleher, Theatre and Public Programs Office, Council of Greater Dandenong
10. Cessalee Stovall (she / her), Founder, Stage A Change
11. Professor James Arvanitakis, Director, Forrest Research Foundation
12. Ade Djajamihardja, Writer, Producer & Co-Founder, A2K Media
13. Reina Takeuchi, Curatorial Program Producer, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art
14. Safdar Ahmed, co-Director, Refugee Art Project
15. Yuki Kawakami, Independent Arts Worker
16. Emily Tulloch, CEO and Artistic Director, Nexus Arts, SA
17. Katrina Irawati Graham, Writer, Director, Activist
18. Maissa Alameddine and Alissar Chidiac, co-Artistic Directors, Arab Theatre Studio
19. Aseel Tayah, Artistic Director and CEO, Bukjeh
20. Michelle Cahill, Artistic Director, Mascara Literary Review
21. Simone Amelia Jordan, Author and Creative Consultant; Managing Director, Higher Ground Consulting Agency
22. Dr Sorayya Mahmood Martin
23. Tiffany Lee-Shoy
24. Tian Zhang
25. Sherryl Reddy, Founder, Inclusion Evolution

26. Ashley Yihsin Chang, Creative Program Curator, Attribute Arts Consultancy Service
27. Ayson Joyce, Founder/Owner, BIPOC Arts Australia
28. Priya Srinivasan, Artistic Director, Sangam: Performing Arts Platform and Hub of South Asia & Diaspora
29. Anne Loxley, Executive Director, Arts and Cultural Exchange
30. Leah Jing McIntosh, Editor, Liminal magazine
31. Tito Scohel, Director, Southern Communities Council (SCC)
32. Professor Kim Cunio, Head of the School of Music, Australian National University
33. Debbie Lee, Executive Producer
34. Haneen Mahmood Martin, Independent Arts Worker and Artist
35. Suellen Maunder, Artistic Director/Chief Executive Officer, JUTE Theatre Company
36. Justine Shih Pearson, Executive Director/ CEO, PACT Centre for Emerging Artists
37. Ashley Yihsin Chang, Taiwan Western Australia
38. Steve Pereira, Independent artist & arts worker
39. Zeina Iaali, co-Drector, Refugee Art Project
40. Alinde Bierhuizen, Fairfield City Museum and Gallery
41. Norma Aguilar, Independent artist & arts worker
42. Simon Mulin, Project Manager, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art
43. Adam Smith, Founder, The Everyone Project Founder
44. Mandy Whitford, Impact Words Consulting
45. Dr Paula Abood, Producer, Educator and Arts Worker

A note on language, from Diversity Arts Australia, August 2023.

Diversity Arts Australia (DARTS) is the national peak organisation advocating for racial equity in the Australian arts, screen and creative sectors from a settler-migrant perspective. We have a quick note to share about our increasing use of the term “culturally and racially marginalised”. The communities we represent have historically been categorised as “culturally and linguistically diverse” (CaLD), however, as the Australia Council’s *Towards Equity* report states that “while there is no widely used standardised definition of the term CALD, and it is considered no longer fit for purpose, it is still used as a measurement of diversity across many policy areas including arts and cultural engagement.”¹ At DARTS, we have found CaLD to be wholly insufficient in supporting our work for anti-racism and racial equity in the creative industries; it does not allow our work to support the most racially marginalised people in our creative communities. CaLD does not indicate experiences of race and racism, which have huge implications for individual and community outcomes. For example, CaLD encompasses middle-class Europeans living in affluent areas, and it encompasses people of colour seeking asylum. It is too broad a category to make meaningful, targeted interventions, and it is too broad a category to advocate on behalf of, with clarity.

Self-determined language is at all times preferred when referring to people’s identities. DARTS therefore aims to honour and respect the way communities and individuals prefer to be identified. However, the reality of Australian multiculturalism is that our demographics are so varied – with people identifying along nation-state lines, as ethnic and religious minorities, in specific language groups, and with several different ethnic and cultural identities – that it is helpful to utilise a category which can allow fundamental transformative change for negatively racialised people ².

At the time of writing, DARTS is compelled by the potential of the term “culturally and racially marginalised” (CaRM). This terminology encourages a reckoning with the ongoing marginalisation of people who are not white, focusing on the systems of power and privilege which lead non-white communities to have less access to opportunities and resources.

Relatedly, DARTS also acknowledges the significance of the term - “culturally and linguistically marginalised” (CaLM). This term is emerging in the academic sphere (Soldatic, 2003) to recognise the marginalisation of people who are not anglo-celtic and do not speak English as their first language. Therefore, the term CaLM focuses on the power and privilege structures that restrict opportunities and resources for culturally and linguistically disadvantaged groups.

1. Australia Council for the Arts, *Towards Equity: A research overview of diversity in Australia’s arts and cultural sector* (2021), <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Towards-Equity-Report.pdf>
2. See the Australian Human Rights Commission definition of “racialisation” and “negatively racialised”, <https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/commit-to-learning/key-terms>



The terminology we use to talk about race is always in a flux and thus the term “People/persons of colour” (POC) is often used colloquially to refer to/include diverse groups of non-white populations. We acknowledge that when addressing or referring to a particular race of individuals, POC should not be used synonymously. Therefore, it is crucial to take into consideration time and historical context, as well as the contemporary cultural mood to be inclusive of racial nuances. In this light, terms such as Bla(c)k, migrant and refugee are also used to recognise the vastly varying ways, degrees, and rates of racism experienced by these unique populations.

In this way, we therefore focus our efforts towards “underrepresented” CaLD communities and arts professionals to address CaLD communities that have experienced deeper historical and systematic exclusion through their racialisation as Other, based on perceptions of their race, culture, language, religion, and more. The CaRM category includes Australian-born people who may self-identify or engage with the languages, customs or cultural specificities of ancestral heritages that differ from those of white people. In our work we also refer to people, communities and creatives of colour to further emphasise that non-white communities experience the sector through the framework of race and as negatively racialised people.

It is important to be able to gather data on ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity and so until there is a more self-determined approach to such measurement, DARTS uses “CaRM” and “underrepresented CaLD” to denote the above-named groups.

Overall, DARTS uses this terminology while acknowledging that neither “CaRM” or “underrepresented CaLD” can capture the nuance and lived experience of people based on culture, ethnicity, residential status, language, class, gender and sexuality. Where possible, it is important to acknowledge and respect the different experiences and exclusions associated with the complex, intersectional realities of peoples’ identities.

We recognise that language is always necessarily changing and shifting with the realities of our social world. DARTS welcomes the opportunity to continue learning from our creative communities and thought leaders on the most appropriate language to guide our research and advocacy.

Thanks for you time and in solidarity,

Diversity Arts Australia.



Multicultural Framework Review Roundtable hosted by Diversity Arts Australia and Creative Australia on 4 September 2023

This Roundtable invited key thinkers and thought leaders from the arts, creative and multicultural sectors together to discuss the Framework and aspirations for the future.

Attendees are listed below and include people from all States and Territories nationally.

Name	Title	Organisation
Dr Paula Abood	Educator, Producer, Writer	Independent
Lauren Mullings	Co-CEO/Creative Director	Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV)
Zindzi Okenyo	Television Presenter	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
Pia Johnson	Photographer, visual artist, lecturer	
Professor Karen Soldatic	Professor, Social Sciences	University Western Sydney
Ana Tiwary	Founder	Diversity in Australian Media
Sukhjit Khalsa	Executive Director	Blueroom Theatre, WA
Tessa Leong	Artistic Director	Centre for Asian Australian Performance
Nur Shkempi	Curator and Writer	RMIT
Mouna Zaylah	Acting Director	Campbelltown Arts Centre
Tiffany Lee-Shoy	Senior Strategic Cultural Officer	Penrith City Council
Chren Byng	Publisher, Children's Books	
Talia Smith	Curator & artist	
Rachael Kiang	Arts Director	Bankstown Arts Centre
Paschal Daantos Berry	Head of Learning and Participation	Art Gallery NSW
Eda Guyaydin		
Dr Pilar Kasat	CEO	Regional Arts WA
Dr Roanna Gonsalves	Author; Lecturer	School of the Arts and Media, UNSW

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Dr Paula Abood	Educator, Producer, Writer	Independent
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Talia Smith	Curator & artist	
Rachael Kiang	Arts Director	Bankstown Arts Centre
Paschal Daantos Berry	Head of Learning and Participation	Art Gallery NSW
Eda Guyaydin		
Dr Pilar Kasat	CEO	Regional Arts WA
Katrina Graham Iriwati	Director, Writer, Educator	QLD
Yusuf Hayat	VISUAL ARTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LEAD	Nexus Arts SA
Pearl Tan	Filmmaker; Discipline Lead-Directing at AFTRS	Australian Film Television and Radio School
Bala Starr		
Efren Pamilacan		