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Senate Standing Committees on
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27 March 2023

Dear Committee Secretary and Senate Standing Committees

Submission into National Cultural Policy Senate Inquiry

To inquire into:

- a) the National Cultural Policy released on 30 January 2023; and
- b) any other related matters

Diversity Arts Australia is pleased to make this submission into the National Cultural Policy Senate Inquiry.

This submission is informed by our work with thousands of culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD), migrant and refugee artists and creative workers via our programs, talks, research and events. It is guided by our work with a range of national peak and grass-roots arts, screen and creative sector organisations, and by years of research and advocacy. Our recommendations are also informed by our joint advocacy with the Consortium of National Peak Arts Organisations whose submissions we broadly support.¹ It is critical that we work together to create a robust, relevant and inclusive creative sector.

¹ These organisations are: APRA/AMCOS, Arts Access Australia, Ausdance National, Australian Museum and Galleries Assoc, Australian Music Centre, Australian Writer's Guild, BlakDance, Live Performance Australia, Moogahlin Arts Centre, National Association for the Visual Arts, Performing Arts Connections Australia, Regional Arts Australia, Screen Producers Association, Symphony Services Australia, Theatre Network Australia.

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 true cultural diversity and believes creative expression is a fundamental human right, which strengthens and connects communities.

We are committed to working for ethno-cultural and migrant cultural equity and our work is underpinned by principles of human rights and the belief that a truly diverse creative sector is fundamental to a democratic, inclusive, sustainable society.

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. While our focus is on cultural and linguistic diversity (CaLD),² we work intersectionally and in partnership with other communities to deliver programs.

Response to Revive

Diversity Arts Australia welcomes the launch of Revive, the Federal Government's new cultural policy, as an important step towards rebuilding an arts and creative sector that has been devastated over the past decade. It heralds significant changes that we haven't seen in the 21-22 year lifetime of the company. We hope to play an active role in the policy's five-year rollout.

Diversity Arts fully supports leading the Strategy with a First Nations-first approach and the key guiding principles across the five pillars, including safe and inclusive work cultures and representation among organisations and leadership. In particular, we expect the second pillar, "A Place For Every Story", to address barriers and the lack of support for migrants, refugees and people of colour within our industry.

² 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-Australians. This also includes people from refugee backgrounds and people on temporary visas. However we understand the limitations of this term, including that people tend not to identify as "culturally and linguistically diverse". We use CaLD while acknowledging that the term can't capture the nuance and lived experience of different people based on culture, ethnicity, residential status, language, class, gender and sexuality. At times we refer to people, communities and creatives of colour to further emphasise that non-Anglo-Celtic communities experience the sector through the framework of race and of being negatively racialised people. We also at times refer to "culturally and racially marginalised" people, communities and artists.

Despite comprising around 40% of the population, research tells us people from CaLD backgrounds are underrepresented across all areas in the creative sector, from leadership to storytelling. In undertaking this significant rebuild of the nation's cultural life, the Policy has an opportunity to support greater cultural safety, employment and leadership opportunities for people from CaLD and culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds.

While celebrating the policy's ambition, which outlines arts and culture as critical priorities for the government, Diversity Arts would like more clarity on how the policy's action items will reflect its vision for greater representation and participation for the culturally and racially diverse creatives that the organisation represents. We strongly recommend that there are specific actions articulated in **Revive** that are focused on increased employment opportunities for CaLD and culturally and racially marginalised peoples, including in positions of leadership and decision-making.

The policy outlines plans to establish the **Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces**. Diversity Arts is supportive of the establishment of this Centre, which presents an important opportunity to address the need for structural change. We commend the acknowledgement of workplace sexual harassment and bullying, and the role that this centre will play in addressing these issues.

It is also critical that the Centre takes an intersectional approach when tackling issues of sexual harassment. This is particularly pertinent as the Music Industry Review found that women of colour experience increased rates of sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination (Support Act Limited 2022).

The Centre presents an opportunity to embed diversity standards and quotas across all dimensions of diversity. Just as the centre will have the capacity to tackle sexual harassment and bullying, it also should have the capacity to address racial discrimination and cultural unsafety within the sector. We strongly recommend that issues of cultural safety and racism are also part of the remit of this new Centre, as well as establishing industry-wide diversity standards and quotas.

Issues of racism must be central to our understanding of, and intervention into, what makes a safe workplace. Recent research from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) shows that the health of migrants declines, the longer they stay in Australia. Racism is a public health issue and continually is shown to impact heavily on life outcomes including health, education and employment.

Diversity Arts' research on the impacts of lost work during the pandemic demonstrated that losing access to arts and culture due to covid and lockdowns, was an experience heightened by racism, and the racialised exclusion of racially marginalised and First Nations artists and creative workers.

Below are some of the key recommendations that Diversity Arts made in our National Cultural Policy submission. These were based on sector consultation and research. Contextual information, including research and statistics, are at the close of this submission.

Recommendations

The main call to action in Diversity Arts' submission was for cultural diversity and racial equity to be promoted and safeguarded in the sector. Crucially, diversity and equity principles must be embedded across all five pillars of the policy. In order for "every story" to have "a place" in the nation, there is a need for resourcing, including support for new and existing networks, organisations and infrastructure for CaLD and culturally and racially marginalised creatives and communities. Strategies to embed diversity, inclusion and anti-racism in the National Cultural Policy include:

- **Anti-Racism Strategy:** We recommend an industry-led anti-racism strategy. The arts and creative industries are well poised to be leaders in enacting the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework, with the Albanese Government committing \$7.5 million dollars toward the development and implementation of the Framework.³ **The Australian arts, screen and creative sectors need robust policy and accountability mechanisms that ensure people who experience structural exclusions have opportunities to meaningfully participate in this economy.**
- **Equity-tested public funding:** A key action in modernising funding and support is embedding equity principles into funding activities. **We call for equity-tested public funding opportunities**, including a minimum 39% of funding earmarked for CaLD/ Culturally and Racially Marginalised communities and artists to be representative of the Australian population.
- **Embedded diversity standards in publicly-funded creative work:** Creative work must have accountability mechanisms for diversity which should be measured annually and

³ Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, Andrew Giles, has stated that "An Albanese Labor Government will deliver on an anti-racism strategy where the Morrison Government has failed to act, to ensure no matter where you are from, no Australian is left behind." Andrew Giles (2022) *LABOR COMMITS TO NEW ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY*, <https://www.andrewgiles.com.au/media-centre/media-releases/labor-commits-to-new-anti-racism-strategy/>

publicly, as is the case in Britain. These standards must address representation, themes and narratives, creative leadership and project teams, industry access and opportunities, and audience development.

- **Accountability for diversity, equity and inclusion:** All recipients of public funding must be accountable for the diversity of their workforce, leaders, procurement of artistic projects and programming - with strong measures and accountabilities regarding cultural and racial equity to ensure their relevance and sustainability.
- **Targeted leadership and professional development opportunities:** Culturally and racially marginalised people must be given opportunities to be in decision-making positions. A national cultural policy should promote investment in targeted multiyear leadership and professional development initiatives for culturally diverse people.
- **Targeted investment in underrepresented artists:** Support for a sector-wide anti-racism strategy with accompanying targeted investment in multi-year projects that elevate diverse voices and address community challenges.
- **Targeted investment in professional development:** Addressing the underrepresentation of culturally diverse artists and creative workers with targeted investment initiatives such as paid internships, mentorships and capacity-building programs.
- **Cultural safety:** Strong institutions must be culturally safe, inclusive and accountable. Work conditions must be made culturally safe with cultural safety principles and practices embedded into policies, practices and governance.
- **Education and capacity building:** Ongoing education and training in anti-racism and cultural safety in a creative sector context is critical and must be supported. These long term capacity building programs should be compulsory for all, with specifically tailored programs for those in leadership positions. **Education, capacity building and cultural safety should be central functions of the Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces.**

Context for our Recommendations

All five pillars of Revive offer great opportunity in bolstering the sector by drawing on Australia's unique position as a country with a diverse First Nations history, present and future – whose cultural diversity continues to change and grow. This diversity is one of our greatest social, cultural and economic assets. It leads to greater artistic vibrancy and innovation and contributes to greater engagement in the arts. Culturally diverse people are more likely to engage with the arts, they attend more arts events, and feel more positively about the place of the arts in

society than non-culturally diverse people. They are far more likely to give money and support to the arts, too.

In recent years, there have been increasing calls for more diversity and cultural safety in arts, screen and media. Twitter campaigns such as #LogiesSoWhite and #JustNotThatMany are just a few examples of the ways in which public conversations about systemic racism and a lack of cultural diversity in Australia's arts, screen and media sectors have taken centre stage.⁴

Research shows that people from CaLD backgrounds continue to be excluded from employment and leadership opportunities in the arts, screen and media sectors despite CaLD communities contributing more money to the arts than the national average.⁵ While highly engaged in the sector, CaLD people are underrepresented in cultural leadership roles and among grant recipients,⁶ and Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds are underrepresented among artists. Many CaLD artists point to continued experiences of exclusion within arts venues and organisations, educational institutions, government and funding bodies.⁷

The National Cultural Policy must address these realities. Such a policy must centre equity for culturally and racially marginalised communities, including concrete strategies to ensure pathways for employment, retention and leadership for underrepresented artists, creative workers and communities. Further:

- In 2022, Diversity Arts Australia's research shows that the pandemic crisis is likely to lead to a loss of a generation of underrepresented First Nations and CaLD creatives who have struggled to survive and maintain their livelihoods in the sector due to loss of work and increased racism and exclusion.⁸
- In 2021, the Australia Council released research demonstrating that arts and culture does not yet reflect the diversity of our population.⁹
- In 2018, Diversity Arts Australia found that CaLD people were under-represented across every leadership role in every cultural sector, organisational type and jurisdiction.¹⁰

⁴ See also <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-03-19/oscar-win-diversity-representation-australia/102112528>

⁵ 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>

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Diversity Arts Australia, *Lost Work 2.0 Survey* (2022), <https://diversityarts.org.au/tools-resources/read-lost-work-for-creatives-of-colour-and-organisations-2-0/>

⁹ 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>

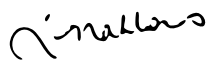
¹⁰ Diversity Arts Australia, *Shifting the Balance Report* (2019) <http://diversityarts.org.au/app/uploads/Shifting-the-Balance-DARTS-small.pdf>

- In 2021, Media Diversity Australia found more than 75% of media presenters, commentators and reporters have an Anglo-Celtic background while only 6% have an Indigenous or non-European background.¹¹
- In 2017, Kim Ho’s independent research on Australia’s 10 major theatre companies found that 70 out of 95 productions were both written and directed by artists with an Anglo-Celtic background.¹²
- In 2016 Screen Australia found that only 18% of main characters on Australian TV were from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds.¹³
- People from a non-English speaking background account for only 10% of the arts workforce, compared to 18% of the general workforce.¹⁴

Within this context, we commend Revive’s goal to “Ensure that government support reflects the diversity of Australia and that all citizens, wherever they live, whatever their background or circumstances, have a right to shape our cultural identity and its expression.” Realising this requires government support to ensure equitable access for all people, regardless of background or circumstance, to opportunities for shaping cultural identity and expression.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this Submission with you further.

Kind regards



Lena Nahlous

CEO

Diversity Arts Australia

¹¹ Media Diversity Australia, *Who Gets To Tell Australian Stories?* (2021) https://www.mediadiversityaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Who-Gets-To-Tell-Australian-Stories_LAUNCH-VERSION.pdf

¹² Kim Ho, *Cultural Diversity in Australian Theatre* (2017)

¹³ Screen Australia, *Seeing Ourselves: Reflections on Diversity in Australian TV Drama* (2016), <https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/fact-finders/reports-and-key-issues/reports-and-discussion-papers/seeing-ourselves>

¹⁴ Australia Council for the Arts, *Making Art Work Report* (2017) <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/making-art-work/>