

Discussion framework - Towards a national cultural policy

1. Culture is at the heart of our nation and the arts are at the heart of our culture, feeding, and in turn, being fed by it. Australian culture is unique, diverse and vital to our present and future wellbeing.
2. Culture is expressed in many ways and reflects our way of life. It encompasses our values, traditions, attitudes and expressions and is shared by us all.
3. It provides the intellectual and imaginative ground for broad understanding and connections. An education rich in culture and arts provides a strong foundation for learning, social engagement and skills development.
4. There is a primary value in creative expression through the arts which governments actively support. Our democracy is strengthened by the diversity of cultural and artistic expression.
5. Australian culture speaks to our identity, it is an important area of common interest which enriches our quality of life and defines us to ourselves and others. Its rich legacy provides knowledge of the past and hope for the future; above all it engages with the moral principles to which we jointly aspire.
6. The culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is the unique backbone of Australian identity; it brings meaning to our nation with a culture unbroken in song, dance and stories over millennia.
7. Culture is a powerful source of wealth for the nation, contributing significantly to the economy and employing hundreds of thousands of Australians. It adds value, attracts students and tourists, provides valuable exports and is essential to sustainable economic activity.
8. Australian culture is a conversation between past understandings and future vision. Culture must both preserve and innovate, ensuring that the links between the present and past remain strong, able to incorporate new and varied perspectives.
9. Our culture draws on the creativity found in many walks of life, in traditional forms which should be preserved and new forms yet to be imagined.
10. Australian culture is produced by its people. The role of government is not to directly shape culture but to enable all Australians – whatever their background, beliefs and abilities – to explore and nurture their creativity and draw on the wealth of our culture to enrich us all.