



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Australia needs a comprehensive cultural policy

New data showing the importance of art and creativity to everyday Australian lives underpins the urgent need for a contemporary cultural policy, says the union for arts and entertainment workers.

Public recognition of the vital role of arts and creativity in almost every aspect of our lives, from education to mental health to strengthening local economies has never been so high, according to a new report released today by the Australia Council.

But this is not reflected by a federal government that has gutted the arts sector both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, says the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance.

MEAA Federal President Simon Collins said Australia needs a cultural policy that transcends political squabbling and will put the arts and creative industries at the centre of our society and economy.

“The Australia Council report shows just how integral art and creativity is to a healthy economy and society,” Mr Collins said.

“The research shows growing numbers of Australians agree arts and creativity build social cohesion and support health, education and the future economy, which will all be critical to a national recovery from the impact of COVID-19.

“There is also significant and growing support for public funding of the arts, not just at the elite level, but also within communities to support learning and development for young people.

“But without a cohesive national cultural policy, arts workers and the community will continue to suffer from chronic lack of recognition and we will continue to see the arts being marginalised, their economic value diminished and creators forced from the sector by financial necessity.

“For the past seven years, the federal government has dropped the ball, cutting funding and signaling it does not value the arts with its decision to abolish a separate Arts department.

“This has been worsened by the slow and inadequate response to the crisis caused by COVID-19.

“The Australia Council is a wake up call for the federal government to get serious and develop a national cultural policy that will carry the arts forward to a sustainable future.”

*The Australian public are urged to have their say on art and creativity by taking part in MEAA’s ‘Participation in the Arts’ survey at <https://withmeaa.typeform.com/to/zA6VKXsp>*

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