

Submission to the new National Cultural Policy

Guildhouse is South Australia's peak body for visual art, craft and design. For 60 years, Guildhouse has provided nation-leading programs, services, education and income to artists. We work at the level of the individual, representing over 1200 practising artists. More than 50% of our artists are mid-career or established and 25% live in regional South Australia. Guildhouse's vision is that artists are valued as creative workers and makers of culture.

This submission draws from extensive consultation with our community.

Pillar 2: The Centrality of the Artist

Recent research indicates that it has never been harder to be a visual artist, maker or designer in Australia (RMIT & University of Melbourne, 2025). Income precarity, unpaid work, decline in real wages, deteriorating working conditions, barriers to access, limited protections, fragile infrastructure and a 'gig-economy' severely restrict who can be a working artist in Australia.

Art is essential. Artists aren't optional.

Guildhouse proposes that the new National Cultural Policy seeks to address structural inequality by creating the conditions in which South Australian visual artists, makers and designers can build sustainable, visible and valued careers in the following ways:

1. Fair Pay, Superannuation, Tax Reform and Direct Funding to Artists

Guildhouse recommends,

- All organisations receiving public funding be required to follow the NAVA Code of Practice as minimum pay standards, including the payment of superannuation.
- All arts grants and prizes be consistently exempt from tax.
- Increasing direct income to artists untied from the production of work (The Guildhouse Fellowship has been recognised as a best-practice example)

2. A future-ready and comprehensive AI Policy

Artists want a seat at the table to develop responsible guardrails to protect their intellectual property.

Guildhouse recommends,

- The participation of artists in all decision-making around AI policy and AI governance.
- Support for organisations working to uphold artist's economic, cultural and moral rights.

Pillar 5: A Place for Every Story

South Australian artists contribute distinctive cultural output and nationally significant artistic innovation.

3. A spotlight on regional artists

In South Australia, distance from major markets and decision-making centres presents a further challenge to career sustainability.

Guildhouse recommends,

- Targeted investment in local cultural infrastructure such as regional galleries and the small-medium arts organisations that sustain South Australian artists.
- Specific market travel programs to support artists to get to markets and bring national and international decision makers to South Australia.

We Are A Nation of Makers

Australia's craft and design sector is highly skilled, diverse and internationally recognised.

Together with our peers in the Australian Craft and Design Centres (ACDC) Network, Guildhouse is calling for the next National Cultural Policy to specifically focus on craft and design, to unlock the full potential of Australia's extraordinary makers.

Guildhouse is advocating for:

- A 10-Year workforce plan for craft and design
- A dedicated craft and design-structure within Creative Australia
- A craft and design export and tourism strategy

<https://nationofmakers.com.au>

Guildhouse appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this national consultation process.

-END SUBMISSION-

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