

## Victorian State Election Platform - October 2022

The Arts Industry Council of Victoria (AICV) is calling on all political parties and independents to actively promote policy for the arts and creative industries ahead of the 2022 Victorian State Election.

Following years of unprecedented disruption, it is vital that our industry receives increased and ongoing investment through what will be a long and complex period of recovery. For Victoria to maintain our reputation as the home of arts and culture in Australia, strong and detailed vision is required from government to ensure that artists, creative organisations, audiences, and our cultural infrastructure are supported to connect and evolve.

AICV is calling for additional funding and support for Victorian artists and cultural organisations, detailed through a series of policy opportunities in our State Election Platform. Additionally, the platform calls for a number of reforms and new initiatives that will create a more equitable and sustainable industry moving forward.

This is a vital moment for the arts in Victoria, with the sector facing significant challenges across creative practice, workforce shortages, and ageing infrastructure. Now is the time for ambitious policy settings that provide a clear and optimistic vision for the future of creativity in our state.

### The Arts Industry Council of Victoria (AICV)

Established as a non-profit peak body in 1989 and convened by industry peak bodies, AICV represents individual practitioners and arts organisations ranging from small independent companies to large state cultural institutions.

AICV is a point of contact and conduit between the creative industries sector and Government, media and other stakeholders at a local, state and national level.

Collectively and individually, AICV provides sector leadership, consults and advocates on cross-sectoral issues, contributes to policy development and debate, and shares information with and about the thousands of artists, artworkers and organisations we represent.

AICV members represent approximately 7,000 Victorian creative organisations, artists and artworkers who support and engage with hundreds of thousands of audiences and participants each year.

#### **Convening Organisations:**

[Arts Access Victoria \(AAV\)](#)

[Ausdance Victoria](#)

[Australian Museums and Galleries Association](#)

[Victoria \(AMAGA\)](#)

[Express Media](#)

[Multicultural Arts Victoria \(MAV\)](#)

[Music Victoria](#)

[National Exhibitions Touring Support Victoria](#)

[\(NETS Victoria\)](#)

[Public Galleries Association Victoria \(PGAV\)](#)

[Public Libraries Victoria](#)

[Regional Arts Victoria \(RAV\)](#)

[Songlines](#)

[The Push](#)

[Theatre Network Australia \(TNA\)](#)

[Victorian Association of Performing Arts](#)

[Centres \(VAPAC\)](#)

[Writers Victoria](#)

In the lead up to the 2022 Victorian State election on Saturday 26 November, it is imperative that the next State Government understands the vital role of the creative industries sector as an interdependent ecological system.

AICV members reiterate that:

- everyone has the right to participate in and enjoy culture and creative pursuits;

- the arts and creativity are integral to Australian life;
- creative practice has profound intrinsic value;
- a healthy, sustainable arts sector makes a vital contribution towards stronger communities and our society's health & wellbeing;
- a sustainable arts and cultural sector is integral to sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes;
- Government and the private sector have a responsibility to support and assist the arts and creative industries.

AICV urges the next State Government to commit to strategic co-design approaches and significant investment in the sector that ensure the long-term recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 in order to retain and develop our creative talent, to reactivate and reinforce our creative industries, and to reconnect and re-energise our communities.

## First Peoples first

### First Nations culture at the heart of policy

AICV acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands known collectively as Victoria and pays respect to Elders, past and present.

We live, work and celebrate on unceded Aboriginal land. We thank all Elders, past and present, for their care, knowledge and generosity, as custodians of the world's oldest continuing culture.

All of us have profited from the growing global interest in our historical and contemporary First Nations' arts and cultural practices.

We cannot expect full recognition of our First Nations peoples until their voices are included in our constitution and we have fully embarked on a treaty process in Victoria.

The integrity of First Nations cultural practice and material needs to be maintained and promoted along with the protection of the rights of the creators and custodians.

#### **POLICY OPPORTUNITIES**

- Victoria to continue to lead the country through its work towards a treaty or treaties with traditional owners and Aboriginal Victorians.*
- Victoria to support a Voice to Parliament as a body enshrined in the Constitution that would enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide advice to the Parliament on policies and projects that impact their lives.*
- Prioritise investment in First Nations arts and culture and peer-to-peer creative projects to further intercultural collaborations and cultural tourism.*
- Promote First Nations cultural educational programs (inc. Indigenous languages).*
- Ensure First Nations centred arts and culture projects are led by First Nations creatives.*

## Equitable access to the creative industries

### ***Ensuring that public support for the creative industries reflects the diversity of Victoria***

Cultural diversity is fundamental to our State – it's not an ideal, it's a fact. How the State Government recognises our diversity will play a critical role in our future development and our capability to respond to the changing global landscape.

Arts and cultural engagement plays an integral role in citizens' participation in society and it is critical that our arts, culture and creative industries reflect the cultural diversity of our State. Cultural equity should be at the centre of policy and delivery and concern all facets of Government-funded activity. Engaging more Victorians in cultural and creative endeavour poses a set of access and participation challenges. A creative industries policy framework needs to courageously address the complexities of our society and by embracing this complexity, strengthen our society and better position ourselves internationally.

AICV calls on the next Victorian Government to take a rights-based approach to the implementation of creative industries policy and to embrace diversity centrally and with strategic intention - through effective consultation processes and with requisite resources.

#### ***POLICY OPPORTUNITIES***

- a. Embed 'cultural safety' standards in publicly funded projects and organisations through the introduction of cultural safety protocols and codes of practice.*
- b. Account for diversity, equity and inclusion: All recipients of public funding be accountable for diversity measures across all funded areas.*
- c. Invest in and promote organisations that are leading by example in driving cultural equity.*
- d. Establish a set of new statewide Cultural Diversity Liaison roles to strategically engage with diverse communities and further opportunities to participate in arts, culture and the creative industries. (i.e., extension on MAV's Cultural Development roles and RAV's Creative Arts Facilitators).*
- e. Enhance support for industry service organisations to provide cultural equity training.*

### ***Supporting grass-roots festivals and events***

The contribution of Victoria's multicultural festivals and events are fundamental to building a robust and healthy multicultural society. Directly and indirectly, they engage hundreds of thousands of people across diasporas and deliver a wide range of cultural, social, educational economic outcomes and are an important entry point for careers in the creative sector.

Victorian communities are dedicating countless volunteer hours to keep their respective events running. With huge demand and limited support for these initiatives, many groups have simply given up trying after many failed attempts to secure funds and navigate complex application processes.

AICV believes that State and Local Governments are not placing enough value on the role of these festivals and events in building community capacity, improving local economies, promoting social cohesion, community harmony and addressing racism.

#### ***POLICY OPPORTUNITIES***

- a. Increase financial support for State-wide local festivals and events to \$10M per annum (inc. multi-year programs of support).*

## Greater job opportunities and pathways

### ***Acknowledging and supporting the special role of artists and creative collaborators***

The State Government, along with Federal and Local Government counterparts, must address the closed loop of professional and content development that currently dominates our sector, and establish new spheres of engagement that recognise and promote new forms of cultural expression.

Even before the effects of COVID-19, the arts were not a viable career path. Our diverse creatives and communities in particular are profoundly under-represented in the sector and encounter barriers to entry in the industry, or recognition for their practice<sup>1</sup>.

The industrial conditions for artists do not match those for the general population. Most artists have to subsidise their practice by taking on unrelated work. If the career pathway for those who have talent is too onerous, the cultural life of the community suffers.<sup>2</sup>

Critical future-proofing for the creative sector is education and training combined with improved workforce conditions. Some AICV members are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and many have a close relationship with tertiary institutions (universities, TAFEs and private training providers) - Victorian cultural organisations can play a more effective role in both training delivery and as a direct point of entry to industry.

In line with the *Centre for Future Work report*, we recommend a public-led reboot of the arts & cultural sector that lays the groundwork for a sustainable, vibrant future for the arts and culture, built through ambitious public investment and planning across many sectors of our cultural economy.

AICV proposes that the new State Government partners longer-term with business, other governments, the broader education and training sector, peak arts organisations and industry stakeholders to ensure a creative career path is viable in our State.

### ***POLICY OPPORTUNITIES***

- a. Invest in leadership, mentoring and professional development opportunities for underrepresented creatives in conjunction with peak and industry service organisations.*
- b. Continue to offer and extend the Creative Ventures Program.*
- c. Apply Consumer Price Indexation (CPI) increases to organisations funded under the Creative Enterprises Program.*
- d. Support national policy on artist award rates (for all art forms) and payments for a range of creative activities.<sup>3</sup>*
- e. In conjunction with the education sector, support multi-year investment in programs that deliver for long-term employment and job security for individual artists.*
- f. Work strategically with education sector counterparts to train future artists.*
- g. Extend artist residency programs across the state's primary and secondary schools.*

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<sup>1</sup> Creatives of Colour

<sup>2</sup> NAVA

<sup>3</sup> Look at initiatives such as Creative New Zealand's 'Remuneration Policy for Artists and Arts Practitioners' and Ireland's 'Basic Income for the Arts' to advance more sustainable creative careers.

## Industry stability and growth

### *Recognising the critical role of arts and culture in our community*

On the back of the global pandemic, wars and the impacts of climate change on communities around the world, there is compelling evidence of a lack of confidence in the future and a lack of faith in institutions to provide a positive way forward. Concerns about inequality, employment and the cost of living are exacerbating the divisions in society which echo through polarising social media channels.

The arts and artists provide invaluable conduits to help rebuild trust in our institutions and in each other. They enable a plurality of voices to be heard, including those who feel they are being left behind by rapid social change.<sup>4</sup> The arts help us understand and live with our fellow citizens, guarding against social divisions and threats and building a healthy society.<sup>5</sup>

There is a plethora of evidence of how arts and culture strengthen social cohesion and improve our well-being. The process of making connections through creative expression builds confidence within individuals and groups; engenders empathy and social awareness which in turn, strengthens relations across communities.<sup>6</sup>

There have been initial steps towards collaborative partnerships with other areas of government<sup>7</sup> to identify mutual social improvement objectives through arts, culture and the creative industries. Yet progress to date has been adhoc and focussed primarily on the derived economic benefits.

AICV members are committed to working with the State government to bring other areas of government and researchers together to conduct robust research of the sector and to develop more streamlined, targeted and mutually beneficial strategies to derive social benefits through creative activity.

### **POLICY OPPORTUNITIES**

- a. *Investigate and implement models for delivery of social and well-being programs<sup>8</sup>*
- b. *Work with tertiary institutions to strengthen socially-engaged arts practice.<sup>9</sup>*
- c. *Invest in longitudinal research to gather data and analyses on the impact and role of arts and cultural practice across a range of economic, social and cultural domains.*

### **Adopting a multi-agency commitment to the creative industries**

An effective policy framework for the Creative Industries needs to be central to the encouragement, collaboration and maximisation of our collective cultural, social and economic potential. Such an ambition, cognisant of all the necessary working parts that comprise our cultural ecosystem (capacity-building, creative development, support for community practice, audience development, training and career development, organisation development etc.) requires inter-departmental, inter-government, and inter-agency commitment at the highest level as well as long-range strategic planning, deep consultation and realistic multi-year funding to be successful.

A three-tiered strategic approach (local, state and State) is required to address the lack of cultural equity across the country with strategic support to increase engagement, capacity and content

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<sup>4</sup> The results of the National Arts Participation Survey show an increasing proportion of Victorians feel that the arts enable us to connect with others (53%, up 15 percentage points from 38% in 2016), understand perspectives that are different to our own (71%, up from 60% in 2016), and that the arts impact our understanding of other people and cultures (60%, up from 52% in 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Creating Our Future Results of the National Arts Participation Survey August 2020

<sup>6</sup> *Cultural Infusion*

<sup>7</sup> such as the Departments of Health and Human Services, Premier and Cabinet, and Justice and Regulation

<sup>8</sup> (i.e., *VicHealth model*).

<sup>9</sup> i.e., support the RMIT Centre for Arts and Social Transformation (CAST) model and *re-establish the Centre for Cultural Partnerships (VCA) model*

development. Industry peak bodies can play a key advisory and coordinating role between these tiers, with initiatives such as the *South West Creative Industries Strategy*, *Regional Collections Access Program* (RCAP) and *Sustaining Creative Workers* - demonstrative of the benefits of government, the community and arts bodies working together.

As representative of a range of industry service organisations, AICV is in a position to take sophisticated and considered cross-departmental/inter-agency approaches in more fully understanding the impact of programs through in-depth and longitudinal research.

#### **POLICY OPPORTUNITIES**

- a. *Create cross-sectoral / cross-government / cross-agency collaborations to meet mutual objectives through arts, culture and the creative industries.*
- b. *Engage AICV members in the co-design, promotion and implementation of key programs.*
- c. *Establish a mid-term organisations funding round, allowing additional entrants access to the program.*
- d. *Establish a new role within Creative Victoria connecting state arts to local arts opportunities with clear links to local government.*

## **New audiences and markets**

### ***Investment in our creative sector is good for the economy***

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a massive impact on the creative industries and on everyone involved in arts and culture. As we slowly emerge from the climate of lockdowns and cancelled events, Victoria is uniquely placed to take economic advantage of its creative and cultural diversity.

In order to regain a firm foothold and further long-term opportunities for creatives to contribute to the economy, larger industry bodies, philanthropic and business should be encouraged to work alongside government departments, individual creatives and smaller entities with grass-roots connections.

To effect positive change in the lives of everyday Victorians, the delivery of arts and culture needs to also consider the agency and opportunities available to individuals to participate in a creative society and employ comprehensive place-based strategies, with social justice factors guiding practice and success alongside economic aspiration.

The input of our culturally diverse communities will result in a more globalised society - capitalising on the experience, knowledge, relationships and nuanced understanding of our inherent population - which in return gives our creative industries a competitive edge.

#### **POLICY OPPORTUNITIES**

- a. *Develop an overarching partnership between government and peak creative industry bodies focused on long term sector recovery and growth.*
- b. *Extend the role of government agencies to broker partnerships between business, governments, larger cultural institutions and small community-led organisations.*
- c. *Capitalise on the opportunities afforded by the 2026 Commonwealth Games Cultural Strategy to engage creatives in the regions – with an emphasis on achieving sustainable legacy outcomes for the creative industries sector.*

## ***Investment in our creative sector is beneficial for international relations***

To understand Victoria's position in the world, we must first understand the world within Victoria. Arts and culture are an important instrument in forming and strengthening international/intercultural relations. They are a medium through which we derive greater understanding of unfamiliar cultures – resulting in closer ties. The arts are also a platform for creative collaboration across diaspora communities – inviting innovation and new markets.

AICV proposes a State-based roadmap for the cultural sector to increase the global visibility; build international networks and platforms, distribution channels and digital markets; and to integrate arts and culture with other soft power assets and structures. Targeted investment will also ensure our creative expressions are more reflective of our diverse population and attract global audiences.<sup>10</sup>

### ***POLICY OPPORTUNITIES***

- a. Integrate investment in Victorian arts and culture within a whole of government approach to support Victoria's interests internationally, and particularly in our region.*
- b. Invest in transnational connections and global audiences - recognising that diverse communities and creatives have the capacity to connect with and attract global and diasporic markets.*
- c. Work with tertiary providers and other stakeholders to establish a cultural platform for international students residing in Victoria that encourages sustainable creative networks and opportunities to improve well-being.*
- d. Build the creative capacity of diaspora communities through the 2026 Commonwealth Games Cultural Strategy.*

## **Innovative creative products and experiences**

### ***Ensuring creativity supported in a digitally enabled State***

In recent years, we have seen changes in the way new 'art centres' are beginning to operate. Recognising that many in respective communities engage with culture outside of the auditorium or gallery, these centres are required to shift away from just being showcases for the performing and visual arts and to have a community building role - as to a place of collaboration, celebration, innovation and learning.

Without neglecting the importance of gathering in physical spaces to engage in culture (including theatres, galleries, libraries, music venues, halls, streets and parks), AICV also recognises the increasing role of emerging technologies in creative innovation and in building and connecting creative communities - Physical and digital spaces intersect and increasingly rely on each other to engage audiences.

In response to the COVID-19 restrictions, some creatives and organisations moved online to try and maintain a practice (delivering workshops, livestream performance, presenting new digital content) - in some cases, these platforms engaged new cohorts of creatives who previously had not been able to audiences for their work. However, many others were less able to transition, with a range of barriers experienced around access or suitability to the digital environment.<sup>11</sup>

A dynamic creative sector needs to encourage disruptive innovations that are society-changing / game-changing. In a fair society, access to technology and related knowledge must go hand in hand with democratisation of culture. Moving forward, we need greater alignment and connection between agencies when making investment decisions on cultural infrastructure. Platforms of the

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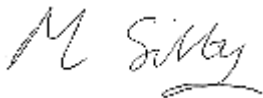
<sup>10</sup> Victoria Council for the Arts Submission to the Department of Foreign Affairs Soft Power Review

<sup>11</sup> Parliament of Victoria - The Impact of COVID-19 on the Arts

future need to be driven by great ideas; principles of access and participation; and resourcing for new models of innovation with a focus on cross sectoral, cross-cultural, cross border collaboration.

***POLICY OPPORTUNITIES***

- a. Invest in digital technology capacity building at the grass-roots community level to improve content development and distribution.*
- b. Support inter-agency partnerships towards a digitally enabled creative sector.*
- c. Invest in access and capacity building when investing in emerging technologies and programs and ensure new dedicated staffing can maintain sustainability of programs.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Silby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small flourish at the end of the name.

*On behalf of AICV Members*

**Michelle Silby** (Media Liaison)

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