

# Submission to the National Cultural Policy - August 2022

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

*AICV members commend the Australian Government on their commitment to the development of a new National Cultural Policy and welcome the opportunity to actively contribute to the shaping of a cultural policy for all Australians.*

## **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.

AICV runs entirely on the commitment of senior representatives from its membership – all of whom have an increasing workload in their respective organisations. AICV has no budget and is solely reliant on the financial support of its not-for-profit members to cover any expenses incurred through current activity.

### ***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](#)

### ***We believe that...***

- everyone has the right to participate in and enjoy the arts;
- the arts are integral to Australian life;
- arts practice has profound intrinsic value;

- a healthy, sustainable arts sector makes a vital contribution towards stronger communities and enhanced health & wellbeing;
- a vigorous and stimulating society is as dependent upon a healthy, sustainable arts sector as it is on healthy, sustainable economic, social and cultural sectors;
- Government and the private sector have a responsibility to support and assist the arts sector.

***We support...***

- ‘arm’s length’ public support for the arts;
- the involvement of peers in policy development, program design and the distribution of public funds;
- the development of a ‘whole of government’ cultural framework within which arts and all other policies can be integrated;
- clear, fair and transparent processes for the selection of peers;
- clear, fair and transparent processes in the distribution of public funds;
- the growth of a national network of state and territory-based arts sector peak bodies.

***We pursue these things by...***

- providing a focal point for discussion, debate and action;
- consulting with our members and with other artists & arts workers;
- consulting and engaging with all levels of government, their agencies, the private & corporate sectors and with the broader community.

AICV is one of four state arts industry councils, which also include: *Arts Industry Council of South Australia, Chamber of Arts and Culture Western Australia and Creative Island (formerly Tasmanian Creative Industries Council)*

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## **Response to National Cultural Policy Goals**

AICV members acknowledge that the original 5 goals of the *2013 Creative Australia National Cultural Policy* remain relevant:

1. *Recognise, respect and celebrate the centrality of First Nations cultures to the uniqueness of Australian identity (First Nations)*
2. *Ensure that government support reflects the diversity of Australia (A Place for Every Story).*
3. *Support excellence and the special role of artists and their creative collaborators (Centrality of the Artist).*
4. *Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector to contribute to national life, community wellbeing and the economy (Strong Institutions).*
5. *Ensure Australian creativity thrives here and abroad in the digitally enabled 21st century (Reaching the Audience).*

AICV members agree that the National Cultural Policy needs to place First Nations arts and culture at the heart as outlined in **NCP Goal 1**:

***Recognise, respect and celebrate the centrality of First Nations cultures to the uniqueness of Australian identity. (First Nations)***

AICV members acknowledge that 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.

Evidence is in abundance on the countless benefits that arise from supporting and promoting Australia’s Indigenous cultures. 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. What is critical in the future, if we are to project ourselves as a confident nation with an ancient history and an appreciation for dynamic contemporary arts, is that 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.

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#### *POLICY OPPORTUNITIES*

- 1. Establish 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.*
  - 2. Prioritise investment in First Nations arts and culture and peer-to-peer creative projects to further intercultural collaborations and cultural tourism.*
  - 3. Promote First Nations cultural educational programs across all ages and states (inc. Indigenous languages).*
  - 4. Centre First Nations voices to ensure First Nations centred arts and culture projects are led by First Nations creatives.*
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Regarding **NCP Goal 2:**

### ***Ensure that government support reflects the diversity of Australia. (A Place for Every Story)***

AICV looks to the Australian government to take a rights-based approach to the creation and implementation of a national cultural policy. An approach that safeguards the cultural rights of everyone; that is meaningful for everyone and acknowledges everyone; that entitles everyone to enjoy, participate in and form part of the culture of society; where everyone has a stake in it which allows them to listen and be heard, and to be involved in developing a rich cultural life; and one that is flexible, responsive and excludes no one.

Cultural diversity is central to our nation including First Nations people; culturally and linguistically diverse people; people with disability; gender diverse people; LGBTQI+ people. We are a multicultural nation – it's not an idea, it's a fact. How the Federal Government recognises our diversity will play a critical role in the future development of our nation and our capability to responding to the changing global landscape.

Engaging more Australians in cultural and creative endeavour poses a set of access and participation challenges. Cultural equity should be at the centre of policy and delivery and concern all facets of Government-funded activity. Nationally, funding needs to be devolved via an equity framework that challenges the prevailing structures of power and privilege.

Arts and cultural engagement plays an integral role in citizens' participation in society and it is critical that our arts and creative industries reflect the cultural diversity of our country. Correspondingly, a National Cultural Policy needs to courageously address the complexities of our society and by embracing complexity, strengthen our society through culture and better position ourselves internationally.

Longer-term policy action is needed to drive change in Australia. Our diverse communities are our greatest human asset and the Australian Government will need to find better ways to meaningfully connect with communities around culture.

Therefore, to ensure that federal support reflects the diversity of Australia, AICV calls on the Australian Government to embrace diversity centrally in the national cultural policy with strategic intention; through effective engagement and consultation processes; and with requisite resources.

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## *POLICY OPPORTUNITIES*

- 1. Embed 'cultural safety' standards in publicly funded projects and organisations through the introduction of cultural safety protocols and codes of practice.*
  - 2. Account for diversity, equity and inclusion: All recipients of public funding be accountable for diversity measures across all funded areas including across all levels of staffing and management.*
  - 3. Invest in and promote organisations that are leading by example in driving cultural equity.*
  - 4. Invest in cultural and social heterogeneity in arts leadership: introduce tenure limits for leadership positions at public institutions (no more than 10 years), to ensure that public spaces are responsive to the changing needs of the arts community they serve.*
  - 5. Enhance support for industry service organisations to provide cultural equity training.*
  - 6. Enhance Arts Law Centre of Australia to work with peak cultural agencies to provide subsidised support to the independent and NFP sector.*
  - 7. Change the current inflexible governance models in order to pay First Nations and independent (unpaid) Board members a fair honorarium. This ensures that independent artists and practitioners are not financially disadvantaged by their participation in the governance of our organisations and enables a more diverse representation on boards.*
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### ***Investment in our creative sector is good for the economy***

In 2019, the arts and entertainment sector contributed \$14.7 billion in value added (GDP)<sup>1</sup>. AICV understands the creative economy to be a long-range focus of a National Cultural Policy – encouraging creative employment and supply-chain relationships in the wider economy. Australia is uniquely placed to take economic advantage of its creative and cultural diversity.

In order to further opportunities for creatives to contribute to the economy, larger industry bodies, businesses, organisations and government departments should be encouraged to work alongside smaller entities with grass-roots connections.

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 companies a competitive edge.

To effect real positive change in the lives of everyday Australians, 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 as much as economic aspirations.

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## *POLICY OPPORTUNITIES*

- 1. Recognise the creative industries sector as an interdependent ecological system.*
  - 2. Develop an overarching partnership between government and peak creative industry bodies focused on long term sector recovery and growth.*
  - 3. Extend the role of government agencies to broker partnerships between business, government, larger cultural institutions and small community-led organisations.*
  - 4. Invest in meaningful ongoing career development opportunities for under-represented creatives (rather than one-off project based opportunities).*
  - 5. Provide creative industry mentoring opportunities with diverse mentors.*
  - 6. Prioritise investment in cross-sectoral creative projects to further business opportunities.*
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<sup>1</sup> [The Australia Institute](#)

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

In order to understand Australia's position in the world, we must first understand the world within Australia. The arts 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. The previous Labor Government, for example, recognised the importance of cultural links as a key component and contributor to developing the capabilities and connections with Asia<sup>2</sup>.

The attainment of soft power benefits delivered by our creative sector requires an appropriately resourced arts sector. Many of our diverse creatives have significant peer-to-peer networks with potential to create quality content across national borders and international education plays a significant role in the Australian economy with students, particularly from Asian countries, increasingly choosing to study in Australia.

Greater Federal investment is required to develop a roadmap for the cultural sector to increase the global visibility; build international platforms, distribution channels and digital markets; and integrate arts and culture with other soft power assets and structures. This will also ensure our creative expressions are more reflective of our diverse population and will attract diverse global audiences.<sup>3</sup>

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### ***POLICY OPPORTUNITIES***

- 1. Integrate investment in Australian arts and culture within a whole of government approach to amplify our soft power and support Australia's interests internationally, and particularly in our region.*
  - 2. Australia's soft power capabilities be increased through scaling up existing programs and strategies.*
  - 3. Invest in global audiences and transnational connections recognising that diverse communities and creatives have the capacity to connect with and attract global and diasporic markets.*
  - 4. 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.*
  - 5. Prioritise investment in First Nations arts and culture and peer-to-peer creative projects to further intercultural collaborations and cultural tourism.*
  - 6. Develop an overarching partnership between government and industry that is focused on long term soft power development through arts and culture.*
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Regarding **NCP Goal 3**:

## **Support excellence and the special role of artists and their creative collaborators. (*Centrality of the Artist*)**

The new Federal Government, along with State 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.

'Excellence' is a problematic term unless the definition is fluid and porous – and the question asked 'by whose standard is excellence defined?' The continual interrogation of 'excellence' must occur in

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<sup>2</sup> *White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century*

<sup>3</sup> [Australia Council for the Arts Submission to the Department of Foreign Affairs Soft Power Review](#)

order for a complex and diverse range of Australian narratives to emerge. Internationally, while First Nations cultures are gaining more attention, Australia is still perceived as a mono-culture of Western heritage. Diversity in Australian art will be key to affect change and bring about a recognition of our diversity.

How cultural funding is devolved needs an accompanying equity framework that challenges the prevailing structures of power and privilege and addresses the 'closed loop' of professional and content development that currently dominates the sector.

Even before the effects of COVID-19, the arts were not a viable career path. Our diverse creatives and communities in particular are profoundly underrepresented in the sector and encounter many barriers to entry in the industry, or recognition for their practice<sup>4</sup>. Research by the *Centre for Future Work*<sup>5</sup>, has revealed the ongoing, devastating impact of COVID-19 on Australia's arts and entertainment sector. The report highlights the devastating impact of the pandemic;<sup>6</sup> and lack of government strategy or resources for long-term recovery compared to other industries and international examples.

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>7</sup>

Critical future-proofing in this policy is education and training combined with improved workforce conditions. Some AICV members are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). As well as having a closer relationship with tertiary institutions (universities, TAFEs and private training providers) - AICV members can play a more effective role in both training delivery and as a direct point of entry to industry.

Changes to fee structures for university courses, introduced by the previous federal government (as part of its Job-ready Graduates Package) has recently compounded the problem by raising the cost of an arts and humanities degree – creating a further barrier to entry for an industry that is haemorrhaging its workforce.

In line with the *Centre for Future Work report*, AICV recommends 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. In particular, Federal Government administration needs to connect more meaningfully with diverse creatives around careers. One-off schemes to improve the situation prove tokenistic, unfairly raise expectations and do little to challenge systems, behaviours and attitudes that ultimately result in creatives giving up in frustration.

AICV proposes that there is significant potential in partnering longer-term with business, the States, the broader education and training sector, peak arts organisations and industry stakeholders to ensure a creative career path is viable in our society.

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#### *POLICY OPPORTUNITIES*

- 1. Locate and invest in underrepresented creatives in conjunction with peak and industry service organisations.*
- 2. Invest in professional development for underrepresented creatives in conjunction with peak and industry service organisations.*

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<sup>4</sup> [Creatives of Colour](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Research by the Centre for Future Work](#): Creativity in Crisis: Rebooting Australia's Arts and Entertainment Sector After COVID (Pennington and Eltham) 2021

<sup>6</sup> *Labour market data for the Arts and Recreation Services industry (ABS) indicates that the pandemic has had a significant negative impact with employment falling by 872,000 people between March and May 2020.*

<sup>7</sup> [NAVA](#)

3. *Protect artist rights and prevent creative exploitation by developing a national policy on artist award rates (for all art forms) and payments for a range of creative activities (including but not limited to artwork loans, artwork commissions, performances, public talks, teaching and workshops, independent curating, and other forms of creative labour).*
  4. *Partner with relevant private and public agencies to ensure equitable and targeted youth arts investment including engaging with youth communities that have been historically underrepresented in arts industries*
  5. *Engage key agencies to provide capacity building support for diverse creatives and groups to obtain new markets.*
  6. *Provide multi-year investment in localised, state-based and small-medium diversity-led creative organisations that supports ongoing programming and staff development.*
  7. *Support multi-year investment in fellowships and job programs that allow for long-term employment and job security for individual artists.*
  8. *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.*
  9. *Work with State counterparts to:*
    - *engage the TAFE network in training future artists*
    - *Strengthen socially-engaged arts practice in tertiary institutions<sup>8</sup>*
    - *extend artist residency programs across all primary and secondary schools*
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Regarding **NCP Goal 4**:

## **Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector to contribute to national life, community wellbeing and the economy. (*Strong Institutions*)**

### ***Creating stronger communities***

On the back of a 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.

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>9</sup> The arts help us understand and live with our fellow citizens, guarding against social divisions and threats and building a healthy society.<sup>10</sup>

There is a plethora of evidence of how art and culture strengthen social cohesion. 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>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> i.e. support the RMIT Centre for Arts and Social Transformation (CAST) model and *re-establish the Centre for Cultural Partnerships (VCA) model*

<sup>9</sup> The results of the National Arts Participation Survey show an increasing proportion of Australians 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>10</sup> [Creating Our Future Results of the National Arts Participation Survey August 2020](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Cultural Infusion](#)

While there have been initial steps towards collaborative partnerships with other areas of government<sup>12</sup> to identify mutual social improvement objectives through arts, culture and the creative industries, progress to date has been adhoc. The emphasis in recent times has been in the economic benefits derived from activity.

AICV members are committed to working with the Federal 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.

As a peak representative for a range of industry service organisations, AICV is in a position to support more sophisticated and considered cross-departmental approaches in more fully understanding the social impact of current programs through more in-depth and longitudinal research.

### ***Adopting a Multi-Agency Commitment***

Politicians of many persuasions and portfolios refer to the instrumental benefits of the arts, though their respective budgets rarely go anywhere near to matching their apparent level of conviction. If the goal is real positive change in our society, social change initiatives can't afford to tinker at the margins of entrenched issues and become cultural Band-Aid solutions.

If a National Cultural Policy is to be a relevant and effective national framework, it 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 and presentation, communities of practice, audiences, education and training, career development, organisation development, markets) requires inter-departmental, inter-government, and inter-agency commitment at the highest level, long-range strategic planning, deep consultation realistic multi-year funding to carry this off. The Arts portfolios and agencies can learn a great deal from organisations such as *VicHealth* which have activated action plans that focus on building health through arts and new media to improve social connection and participation.

### ***Engaging three tiers of government***

A National Cultural Policy needs to recognise the role of States and Councils as integral to the increase of creative capacity across the Country. A 3-tiered strategic approach (local, state and federal) is needed to address the lack of cultural equity across the country with strategic support to increase engagement, capacity and content development in collaboration with our many diverse communities across the country. Industry peak bodies such as AICV can also play an advisory and coordinating role when working at a regional level, with initiatives such as the *South West Creative Industries Strategy* - demonstrative of the impact of government, the community and arts bodies working together.

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### ***POLICY OPPORTUNITIES***

- 1. Create cross-sectoral / cross-government / cross-agency collaborations to meet social objectives through arts and culture.*
- 2. Investigate and implement models for delivery of social and well-being programs (i.e. Vic Health).*
- 3. Target investment to geographically and socioeconomically marginalised areas towards socially determined objectives.*
- 4. Increase creative leadership programs across the sector with incentives for organisations of varying scale and type to participate.*
- 5. Work with Business and Education to train leaders of the future.*

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<sup>12</sup> such as the Departments of Health and Human Services, Premier and Cabinet, and Justice and Regulation  
*AICV Submission to National Cultural Policy 2022*

6. *Form Interdepartmental Working Groups across government to meet a range of instrumental objectives through arts and culture.*
  7. *Establish a set of new Cultural Diversity Liaison roles with State and Local government to strategically engage with culturally diverse communities and further opportunities for arts and cultural participation.*
  8. *Work with States and tertiary institutions to strengthen socially-engaged arts practice.*<sup>13</sup>
  9. *Invest in longitudinal research to gather data and analyses on the impact and role of arts and cultural practice across a range of social indicators.*
  10. *Provide support to ensure the work of A New Approach continues.*<sup>14</sup>
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Regarding **NCP Goal 5**:

### **Ensure Australian creativity thrives here and abroad in the digitally enabled 21st century. (*Reaching the Audience*)**

In past decades we have seen some changes in the way new ‘art centres’ are beginning to operate. In recognition of the way that many people in their respective communities engage with culture outside of the auditorium or gallery, they are now seen as needing to have a strong alignment with community building; a shift from just being showcases for the performing and visual arts, to a place of 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 members recognise the increasing role of emerging technologies in innovation and in building community in physical and virtual spaces. Technology is a means rather than an end. Access to technology and related knowledge must go hand in hand with democratisation of culture – increased access and participation in the arts and culture.

As a creative sector, we should be encouraging disruptive innovations that are society-changing / game-changing. Physical and digital spaces intersect and increasingly rely on each other in engaging audiences. Moving forward, we need greater alignment and collaboration between Federal, State and Local governments when making investing decisions on cultural infrastructure driven by great ideas and principles of access and participation – resourcing new and emerging models of innovation with a focus on cross sectoral, cross-cultural, cross border collaboration.

In response to the COVID-19 restrictions, there was some capacity for creatives and organisations to move online to try and forge a career (delivering workshops, livestream performance, presenting new digital content) - in some cases, these new artforms engaged new cohorts of creatives who previously had not been able to audiences for their work. However, many were less able to transition, with a range of barriers experienced including lack of access to digital connectivity, lack of resourcing to create or move content to the digital space, lack of suitability of the medium of art to the digital space, and issues regarding access by the audience.<sup>15</sup>

The challenge is that Innovation needs to acknowledge that everyone has an entitlement to enjoy, participate in and be reflected in the culture of society and contribute to the development of the nation’s rich cultural life. Any form of innovation, and in particular emerging technologies, must consider how it will be relevant and accessible to all Australians. Again, the question of who is

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<sup>13</sup> i.e. support the RMIT Centre for Arts and Social Transformation (CAST) model and *re-establish the Centre for Cultural Partnerships (VCA) model*

<sup>14</sup> [A New Approach](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Parliament of Australia - The Impact of COVID-19 on the Arts](#)

excluded is critical. To address this, the current definitions and funding mechanisms of the arts, and particularly the hierarchies attached to “core arts”, must be broadened in order to achieve the flexibility and dynamism required for innovation.

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#### *POLICY OPPORTUNITIES*

- 1. Invest in digital technology capacity building at the grass-roots community level to improve content development and distribution.*
  - 2. Invest in access and capacity building when investing in emerging technologies and programs and ensure new dedicated staffing can maintain sustainability of programs.*
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Submitted by AICV Members:

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**Andy Miller** (Co-Convenor) – Co-Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural Arts Victoria

**Lucy Hamilton** (Secretary) – Chief Executive Officer, Writers Victoria

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**Simone Schinkel** – Chief Executive Officer, Music Victoria

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**Patrick McCarthy** – Executive Director, Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres

**Angela Savage** – Chief Executive Officer, Public Libraries Victoria

**Joshua Lowe** – General Manager, Theatre Network Australia

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