

National Cultural Policy Submission

Queensland University of Technology

Submitted: On behalf of an organisation with arts-components (e.g. community organisation, tourism, venue, health, education etc)

What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you? Feel free to respond to any or all pillars:

First Nations

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is well placed to support the development of a thriving and self-determined First Nations creative ecosystem. QUT has taken important steps to develop education and creative arts programs available through coursework and research that “recognise, respect and celebrate the centrality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to the uniqueness of Australian identity” (Australian Government, 2013).

Access to higher education and flexible pathways that support First Nations students are notable challenges for the university sector. A key contributor to employment growth in the cultural sector is dedicated pathways for First Nations creative workers and leaders, expanding access to higher education and ensuring coursework programs are developed in partnership with the community embedding indigenous perspectives and supporting First Nations students' participation. There are opportunities for universities to play an important role in capacity building for First Nations-led small to medium arts organisations and providing new pathways to higher education. Programs like QUT's Indigenous Australian Doctoral to Post-Doctoral (P2P) Fellowship provide supported pathways through study into academic careers. The P2P program supports Indigenous Australians to gain doctoral research qualifications and academic positions, thereby strengthening Indigenous Australian early career academic capability, knowledge and perspectives. This supportive pathway is an example of how a National Cultural Policy could provide direction to universities to consider ways to create and invest in pathways that support future Indigenous Australian creators, scholars, and cultural leaders. The implementation of a National Cultural Policy provides an opportunity and the discursive authority to develop schemes to support partnerships between the university, community, and First Nations SMEs. This may include dedicated funding for First Nations arts makers to develop programs for delivery in the university focused on Indigenous entrepreneurship, a dedicated ARC Linkage scheme to support First Nations SMEs, and coursework programs designed in partnership with SMEs that enable students to complete studies in the workplace and on Country.

The Centrality of the Artist

The centrality of the artist provides an opportunity for the National Cultural Policy to consider children, young people, and teachers as artists. Within Australian education, children and young people are viewed as artists and their teachers as co-artists as they create, present/perform, and respond to their own art and the artwork of others. To strengthen the positioning of children, young people, and teachers as artists, attention should be given to the training and support structures to enable this agency. Within Initial Teacher Education courses at universities, time allocation to The Arts has been reduced significantly, leaving teachers entering the profession feeling under-prepared to teach The Arts adequately. This is most evident in Primary Teacher Education courses, where the average number of hours for arts education and engagement across courses in Australia is between 5-10 hours in total within a student's course experience. The outcome of this under-preparedness is that The Australian Curriculum: The Arts has not been implemented uniformly or effectively Australia-wide as originally intended.

QUT alumni research – conducted as part of the *Creativity at Work* report (2021) – shows that within five years after graduation, up to 12% of graduates from the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) go on to careers in education; this figure is higher if it includes education within public programming of the GLAM sector. Some graduates work in informal education settings, while others return to study to undertake a Master of Teaching as a pathway to registration as a

teacher in early childhood, primary and secondary education sectors. With the recent introduction of a double degree combining the Bachelor of Fine Arts with the Bachelor of Education (Secondary), QUT offers a pathway that allows students to combine a range of creative arts disciplines, including Dance, Music, Drama, Film and Screen, Animation and Creative Writing, with initial teacher education. The intentions of the previous government's Job Ready Graduates package to influence student choice of programs and influence University decision-making regarding educational offerings, combined with the impacts of COVID-19, have had a potentially damaging impact on programs across arts and culture. To ensure a sustainable future workforce within the creative and cultural industries, there is a need to understand the negative impact the Job Ready Graduates package has had on programs across Creative Arts, Communication, Humanities and Social Science. Given the August 2022 Initial Teacher Education roundtable undertaken by Minister for Education Jason Clare to address issues in teacher education and workforce retention – as well as the upcoming cross-portfolio Jobs and Skills Summit, in light of the significance of the creative sector to the Australian economy – there is a need to understand the implications for creative arts pathways to teacher registration. A review of the current fee structure may enable stronger education workforce pathways for creative arts graduates and would also address the false notion that studying Humanities, Social Sciences or Creative Arts does not lead to employment. Strategic investment from government is needed to address the immediate skills and training shortages and increase professional development opportunities across the creative sector. Increased funding to universities with a focus on the redevelopment of courses in creative arts and education would assist universities in developing a suite of degree structures that are more responsive to the needs of a 21st-century student experience. The current models of a three-year undergraduate degree with an additional two years if a graduate moves into an education pathway may not be the most effective way to develop arts education workforce capacity. The rigid funding structures and requirements of demands of professional accreditation that universities must work within currently leave little room for innovation in course offerings.

Strong Institutions

Universities are a central site for training young people for employment and pathways in both the creative and education sectors. From research to undergraduate programs, universities are important sites for developing new ideas and capabilities and an important part of the innovation ecosystem, both within and beyond the creative and cultural industries, contributing towards the goal of “building sustainable, networked and globally recognised creative industries.” QUT alumni research – conducted as part of the *Creativity at Work* report (2021) – shows that approximately 40% of graduates from programs in the creative industries work in companies outside the creative industries and in roles with titles that are not typically associated with creativity. Significantly, however, a notable percentage of these alumni report that the skills developed through their creative industry studies are valuable/important to their current employment. The same survey showed that a larger percentage of graduates from the creative arts program at QUT start their own creative enterprises than the national graduate surveys indicate for all university graduates. QUT's creative industries alumni have established and led innovative firms across the performing arts, design and communications sectors, including Like a Photon Creative, Dead Puppet Society, Arkose Labs, Bigfish.tv, Josephmark, Little Red Company, Oitch Studios, to name a few. Increased training opportunities, with an emphasis on internships and apprenticeships, will assist in attracting those who may not have considered a career in the arts. The cultural sector should be encouraged to broaden its positive economic and cultural impact through cross-portfolio interaction at the government level.

There is a need to ensure courses develop both ‘deep’ skills and a wider range of other skills, too. There is an increasing need for young people and future graduates to hold specific creative skills, combined with an ability to collaborate across disciplines, work with other people and respond to immediate challenges.¹ Creative graduates also need support in developing the language of their transferable skills and developing the confidence to apply these across professional contexts. Identification and discussion of transferable creative skills should be integrated into creative training so that students can understand and articulate the wider value of their professional offering.² There is

¹ Australia Council and QUT 2021, *Creativity at Work: Interdisciplinary learning in industry and community settings*.

² As above.

a need to coordinate and build clear pathways to the creative and education workforces through different stages of the education system. Better links between the sector, schools and tertiary institutions could ensure that subjects and training offered are tailored to the skills needs of the sector in the future. Universities, through new forms of offerings like micro-credentials, online education and programs designed in close partnership with industry, are well placed to meet this need. A National Cultural Policy could establish the conditions to support these types of programs and partnerships.

The National Cultural Policy should recognise and provide training to fill the skills shortages in the Creative Industries, which are not currently represented in the National Skills Commission Skills Priority List 2021, particularly shortages in areas of company, event, and stage management, technical staff and crew plus production and customer services/front of house roles. Similarly, the Australian Broadband Advisory Council's position paper, *Growing Australia's Creative Industry* (2022), identifies workforce capabilities as a key issue for the Creative Industries in Australia to be sustainable and globally recognised.

Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why. Feel free to respond to any or all that are applicable to you:

First Nations

All Australian university campuses, including QUT, are cultural heritage sites situated on the unceded lands of our continent's First Peoples. Universities play a role in connecting contemporary Australia with rich cultural history through their reflection of the importance of place and country on their campuses. QUT's *Country to Campus* plan recognises the importance of Country and establishes a framework to guide the way the university makes decisions about campuses that recognise, celebrate, and grow the relationship between the built environment and traditional owners. Universities like QUT have made steps towards embedding indigenous Australia culture in a holistic manner, including the establishment of the Carumba Institute, Indigenous Research Strategy, HEA Indigenous Associate Fellowship program, and significant appointments such as QUT Elder in Residence and Indigenous Chair in Creative Industries.

The Centrality of the Artist

A National Cultural Policy should support programs that celebrate and enrich arts learning, and acknowledge that children, young people, and arts educators are artists and artmakers. In the Gillard Labor government's version of *Creative Australia* (2013) the centrality of the artist was visible in Goal Two that stated: "Ensure that government support reflects the diversity of Australia and that all citizens, wherever they live, whatever their background or circumstances, have a right to shape our cultural identity and its expression" (Australian Government, 2013, p. 44). This is where the intersection of young Australians and the arts is located. This was further developed in the pathways for action section and was articulated as "a universal arts education for lifelong learning and to drive creativity and innovation" (Australian Government, 2013, p. 77). This statement explicitly supported the inclusion of an arts entitlement for all young Australians in the Australian Curriculum by mandating that "every student has the opportunity to receive an arts education" and that "creativity in schools is considered as a vital 21st century skill to drive innovation and productivity" (ibid.). To embed the centrality of the artist in education contexts, consideration should be given to engaging artists in school contexts through a national Teaching Artist Program. Universities have the knowledge and skill sets to develop training to support the shaping of such a program and provide training structures to enable workforce readiness. Such a pathway could be included in capstone units in either or both creative arts and education courses. Such a program should be supported with a quality assurance program funded by government.

Strong Institutions

Universities and the arts and creativity courses they offer should be considered an essential part of arts ecology. As institutions, universities not only deliver training for the next generation of arts makers, arts thinkers and arts technical specialists but they are also sites of arts engagement. Universities, such as QUT have invested in cultural infrastructure by developing performance spaces and art galleries, as well as comprehensive scholarly libraries that form a critical component of the Australian public access library system. These spaces are not solely utilised by university staff and students. These spaces are used by arts companies and artists, both local,

national, and international, and are open to the general public and can be viewed as laboratories or ideas factories in which experimentation is endorsed and resourced through the collaboration of artists, students, researchers and the broader community. The cultural spaces within universities are supported by strong networks such as University Art Museums Australia (UAMA), which represents the nation's many university art institutions that present a diverse exhibition program, showcasing their extensive collections and blending academic research with widely accessible public projects and programs. University Art Museums play a vitally important role in the education and professional practice of students who become artists, arts administrators, curators and museum leaders. QUT is committed to the Humanities, Creative Arts, and Social Sciences and recognises the importance of these fields to vibrant society, economic complexity and innovation ecosystems required to support national industry. This is seen through our investments in Education and the Creative Industries. Additionally, the vital connection between STEM and HASS – the site of possibly the single most important productivity gain on offer to the Australian high-skill economy – is important for a university of technology, as many of the challenges Australia faces in the coming decades require the combination of expertise across disciplines. QUT's collaboration between QUT and UAP, an artist-led company, is one example where art-led innovation resulted in the establishment of the [Advanced Manufacturing Robotics Hub](#), which has impacts far beyond the creative industries. Similarly, QUT's [Digital Media Research Centre](#) engages in work that will guide the way as a nation we think about new technologies such as AI, social media platforms, digital inclusivity and digital safety, and their impacts on national culture.