

National Cultural Policy submission

Digital Preservation Coalition

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The [Digital Preservation Coalition](#) (DPC) is a worldwide member-based charity which brings together organisations of all sizes and from every sector to ensure the preservation of our digital heritage. The coalition has more than 135 members in six continents, including 16 members in Australasia and the Asia-Pacific. Local Australasian members include national and state cultural institutions, archives, universities, and government bodies that hold collections of digital material that is an important part of Australia's heritage. The DPC's Australasia and Asia-Pacific office is based in Melbourne.

The DPC is making this submission on Australia's National Cultural Policy considering the massive transformation of cultural, information, business, and administrative material into digital formats over the past 20 years. Digital content is fragile, and safeguarding Australia's arts, entertainment and cultural content held in this format into the future will require concerted ongoing planning around digital preservation. The proper preservation of Australia's corpus of digital cultural production today will increase its value for the future.

Digital preservation cannot simply be undertaken at the end of an artistic project or event. The long-term preservation of digital content requires forward planning and ongoing active engagement with technological and social change by all parties involved in the digital lifecycle.

Australia's new National Cultural Policy will be intrinsically digital – whereas in 2013 *Creative Australia* could refer to producing content for online delivery in a converged environment, in 2022 all cultural material will be either be born digital or have a connected digital component. And the availability of this content for future audiences and for artistic and commercial re-use is at significant risk without careful planning for the ongoing preservation of material held this important and fragile medium.

Digital preservation is not only a concern for memory institutions and non-commercial organisations. Our contemporary digital production industry needs to ensure ongoing access to its own digital content to enable future growth. To protect access to Australia's cultural heritage into our digital future, the new National Cultural Policy will need to build the preservation of digital content at all points in its lifecycle into all areas of cultural practice.

The DPC's current strategic plan [A sustainable future for our digital assets 2022 - 2027](#) provides support for a worldwide community working together to bring about a sustainable future for our digital assets. The DPC supports its members to deliver resilient, sustainable, and useful long-term access to digital content and services, helping them to access and use digital materials beyond the limits of technical obsolescence, media degradation and organizational change.

The DPC wishes to work with its members and others in the Australasia and Asia-Pacific region to ensure that Australian creativity is supported to thrive and reach its audiences sustainably in the digitally enabled 21st century.

National Cultural Policy Submission Template

We have provided a list of optional questions to help guide your input.

1. Are you submitting this submission (tick all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of an arts peak body
<input type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of a for-profit arts business
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of an organisation with arts-components (e.g. community organisation, tourism, venue, health, education etc)
<input type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of government or government body
<input type="checkbox"/>	As a worker/professional in an industry who uses arts (e.g. art therapist, tour guide)
<input type="checkbox"/>	As an artist
<input type="checkbox"/>	As an individual

The original 5 goals of the 2013 Creative Australia National Cultural Policy were:

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

For the purposes of the consultation we have distilled these into 5 pillars: First Nations, A Place for Every Story, the Centrality of the Artist, Strong Institutions and Reaching the Audience.

2. 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:

1. First Nations	Artists' career pathways and the growth of the creative industries will be supported by a network of strong institutions with the capacity to collect preserve and share artists' or groups' digital outputs or provide digital access to other creative outputs. Local expertise in digital preservation can strengthen individual artist careers, ensure their standing in the global community, and can capture and cultivate a holistic and representative picture of Australia's cultural industries and heritage into the future.
2. A Place for Every Story	
3. The Centrality of the Artist	
4. Strong Institutions	Digital preservation is the series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary. It refers to

	<p>all of the actions required to maintain access to digital materials beyond the limits of media failure or technological and organisational change. It is one of the most critical challenges and opportunities facing Australia's cultural future. Over the last 20 years, digital delivery has become the most pervasive and effective methods for providing access to cultural content. However, it is unknown how much of the digital, or digitised, cultural content created over the past 20 years will remain accessible in the future. The vitality of our cultural community will be unsustainable if we do not have a community-wide commitment to digital preservation. This is not an impossible problem or something that cannot be addressed without million-dollar investments, it is solvable via collaboration, organisational commitment and ongoing support for appropriately trained staff and systems.</p> <p>As digital technologies become more pervasive throughout our community, it is clear that this challenge and opportunity applies equally to all the pillars being investigated for incorporation into the National Cultural Policy. The incorporation of digital preservation commitments into the future planning for all of Australia's cultural community at this critical point in history will provide an unmatched artistic, digital and commercial dividend for the country and the basis for a strong cultural future.</p>
<p>5. Reaching the Audience</p>	<p>To ensure ongoing access to digital content into the future requires a long-term commitment to digital preservation across the sector. Digital sustainability over the long (and short) term is a key necessity for reaching online audiences both now and into the future. To avoid aspects of our cultural existence disappearing as ephemera within 5 years or less, we need to ensure that Australian creativity at all levels incorporates an engagement with the requirements for the preservation of our digital heritage into the future.</p>

3. 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:

<p>1. First Nations</p>	<p>Digital skills are important not only at the production point of creative practice they also extend across the whole lifecycle of digital content. If investment in digital creativity is to be maximised, planning for digital preservation needs to be incorporated into all stages of the digital lifecycle. Future cultural and commercial sustainability will depend upon sector-</p>
<p>2. A Place for Every Story</p>	
<p>3. The Centrality of the Artist</p>	

	wide commitment to the long-term preservation and management of digital content.
4. Strong Institutions	<p>Through its over 20 years of experience the DPC understands that digital preservation does not arise simply from IT-based solutions. It takes a community to support the real long-term preservation of digital content and requires consideration of the broader social, cultural, commercial, and ethical considerations impacting the creation and use of digital content. This requires planning that extends across the whole sector and across time.</p> <p>The DPC can help to embed digital sustainability into the practice of Australian cultural creators and institutions. To establish a sustainable and comprehensive roadmap to transform and safeguard Australia's arts, entertainment and cultural sector now and into the future will require a sector-wide, embedded, and comprehensive approach to digital preservation by both commercial and non-commercial actors in Australia's cultural space. The DPC is aware that the importance of digital preservation extends across all 5 pillars of the proposed National Cultural Policy. To support all artists, strengthen the capacity of the sector and ensure Australian creativity thrives into the digital future requires an understanding of the importance of digital preservation and a commitment to its incorporation into future planning for our cultural and creative community.</p>
5. Reaching the Audience	

4. Are there any other things that you would like to see in a National Cultural Policy?

The DPC would like to see a commitment to digital preservation built into the strategic planning for all of Australia's major cultural organisations and funding bodies and simple, accessible and easily implemented pathways to digital preservation good practice made available to all practitioners within Australia's creative industries.

5. We may use some of your words as part of the National Cultural Policy Report. If we do, how would you like us to attribute your words? (tick your choice of attribution and complete the fields if applicable)

	Anonymous submission
✓	Name: Robin Wright, Head Australasia and Asia-Pacific Organisation (if applicable): Digital Preservation Coalition Contact (email or phone): robin.wright@dpconline.org

6. If you would like your submission to be published on our website but anonymous, or private (not published on our website), please indicate this below.

If you do not tick either option, we will treat your submission as suitable for publishing on our website with your name or organisation name attributed. For more details please see our Privacy Policy at: www.arts.gov.au/privacy-policy.

Remain Anonymous

Please select if you prefer your submission to remain anonymous. This means your submission will display on the website with the name Anonymous and your name and/or organisation will not appear anywhere on the website.

Private submission

Please select if you prefer for your submission and/or any additional documents not to be displayed or made publicly available on the website.

Please send your completed submission to culturalpolicy@arts.gov.au or upload it to the short form at www.arts.gov.au/culturalpolicy.