

# A New Approach (ANA)

24 June 2024

Cities and Suburbs Unit  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts  
(via submission portal)

## National Urban Policy consultation draft

A New Approach (ANA) welcomes this opportunity to make a submission on the draft National Urban Policy (the draft Policy). ANA is Australia's national arts and culture think tank. Through credible and independent public leadership, ANA helps build an ambitious and innovative policy and investment environment for arts, culture and creativity. We work to ensure Australia can be a great place for creators and audiences, whoever they are and wherever they live.

ANA welcomes the draft Policy's emphasis on the importance of collaboration across portfolios and levels of government on urban policy, including arts and culture. ANA welcomes the draft Policy's direct links to cultural policy and the recognition that arts and culture, and First Nations cultural heritage, are important to community belonging and social inclusion. This aligns with ANA's focus group research showing that middle Australians see arts and culture as<sup>1</sup>

- Essential to being human
- Drivers of wellbeing and productivity
- Fostering innovation, imagination and expression
- The building blocks of community and place

Below, we suggest refinements to the draft Policy for consideration during finalisation of the Policy. We confirm that this submission can be made public. In our role as a philanthropically funded, independent think tank, ANA is ready to provide further information about the response in this submission and would welcome the opportunity to discuss.

Warm regards,



Kate Fielding, CEO, A New Approach (ANA)

<b>Suggested refinement</b>	<b>Reason</b>
<p>In the Introduction, support the statement 'Together, the Regional Investment Framework and the National Urban Policy will seek to support the sustainable growth of cities and regions' with examples of areas for potential action, including arts and culture</p>	<p>ANA's middle Australia research, mentioned above, was a national focus group study of people living in outer suburbs and regional areas. This shows that arts and culture are important not only in cities, but also in the regions.</p> <p>However, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows that Australians in capital cities are more likely than those in other regions to attend and participate in cultural and creative activities.<sup>2</sup> One Australian study estimated that compared to inner city areas, costs of mainstream cultural consumption were 22% higher in regional centres, 85% higher in country towns and 565% higher in remote towns.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Collaboration between levels of government and coordination between urban and regional policies can help ensure all Australians enjoy the benefits of urban policy, including from arts and culture.</p>
<p>Under Part 4 and Objective 2 ('All people belong and are welcome'), highlight the importance of maintaining high levels of participation in arts, culture and creativity.</p>	<p>Australians from every walk of life participate in and benefit from arts, culture and creativity. Australia's first Wellbeing Framework highlights ABS data that 82% of adults and 94% of children attended at least one live arts and culture activity in 2017-18.<sup>4</sup> Creative Australia's 2022 National Arts Participation Survey found that 97% of Australians engaged with the arts in some way and that 84% acknowledged the positive impacts of arts and creativity.<sup>5</sup></p>
<p>Under Part 4 and Objective 2, highlight the importance of cultural infrastructure.</p>	<p>As the most recent Infrastructure Audit shows, planning arts and cultural infrastructure is an essential part of infrastructure planning.<sup>6</sup> The Audit found that benefits of arts and cultural 'include contributing to quality of life, social cohesion, to our own individual and collective identities of Australia and what it means to be Australian, particularly in providing connections to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.'</p>

<b>Suggested refinement</b>	<b>Reason</b>
<p>Under Part 4 and Objective 2, support the statement 'participation and engagement in accessible arts and culture is fundamental to social cohesion' with ANA's research.</p>	<p>Through our focus group research, middle Australians highlighted local access, social cohesion and inclusion when discussing arts and culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Middle Australians between 19 and 29 years of age highlighted the importance of arts and cultural icons in building a collective identity with one's local community<sup>7</sup></li> <li>● Middle Australians between 35 and 60 years of age placed great value on participating in many different types of arts and cultural activities, often at a local, community level.<sup>8</sup></li> <li>● Middle Australians between 58 and 75 years of age considered arts and culture to be highly valuable and therefore a priority for investment in the context of community cohesion.<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>
<p>Under Part 4 and Objective 5 ('Our urban environments and communities promote health and wellbeing') and the list of initiatives under that objective, include the Measuring What Matters framework.<sup>10</sup></p>	<p>This is Australia's national wellbeing framework that will track our progress towards a more healthy, secure, sustainable, cohesive and prosperous Australia, including measures relating to arts and culture. It provides the core national framework for measuring wellbeing impacts.</p>

## References

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- <sup>1</sup> Kate Fielding, Aakanksha Sidhu, and Angela Vivian, "Intergenerational Arts and Culture: Lessons across Middle Australia" (A New Approach (ANA), October 2023), 5, <https://newapproach.org.au/analysis-papers/intergenerational-arts-and-culture-lessons-across-middle-australia/>.
- <sup>2</sup> This was true before and during COVID-19. See [Cultural and creative activities \(2021-22 data\)](#), [Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events, Australia \(2017-18 data\)](#) and [Participation in Selected Cultural Activities \(2017-18 data\)](#).
- <sup>3</sup> Jason Potts and Trent McDonald, "Why the Bloody Hell Live There? – First Estimates of a Cultural Consumption Price Index by Australian Region" (Analysis and Policy Observatory, April 1, 2011), 24, <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2011-03/apo-nid24447.pdf>. See also an article explaining the study: Stuart Cunningham and Jason Potts, "The Price of Our Great Digital Divide," *The Australian*, May 13, 2011, sec. Politics, <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/the-price-of-our-great-digital-divide/news-story/dbf6bf3002c1ee56d981605dbb60ce2d>.
- <sup>4</sup> These are the latest pre-COVID-19 figures. Figures from 2020 to 2022, found attendance had slipped to 64% during COVID-19. Based on Commonwealth of Australia, "Measuring What Matters: Australia's First Wellbeing Framework," 2023, [https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/measuring-what-matters-statement020230721\\_0.pdf](https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/measuring-what-matters-statement020230721_0.pdf).
- <sup>5</sup> Creative Australia, "Creating Value: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey," September 19, 2023, 10, <https://creative.gov.au/advocacy-and-research/creating-value/>.
- <sup>6</sup> Infrastructure Australia, "An Assessment of Australia's Future Infrastructure Needs: The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019" (Australia: Australian Government, 2019), 442, <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-08/Australian%20Infrastructure%20Audit%202019.pdf>.
- <sup>7</sup> Jodie-Lee Trembath and Kate Fielding, "The next Generation of Voters: Young Middle Australians Talk Arts, Culture and Creativity," Insight Series (Canberra: A New Approach, August 2021), 37, <https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ANA-InsightReportSix-Fullreport-6.pdf>.
- <sup>8</sup> Kate Fielding and Jodie-Lee Trembath, "A View from Middle Australia: Perceptions of Arts, Culture and Creativity," Insight Series (Canberra: A New Approach and the Australian Academy of the Humanities, May 2020), 35, <https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/3-ANA-InsightReportThree-FullReport.pdf>.
- <sup>9</sup> Angela Vivian and Kate Fielding, "Lifelong: Perceptions of Arts and Culture among Baby Boomer Middle Australians". Insight Report No. 2022-02" (Canberra: A New Approach (ANA)), 37, accessed January 19, 2023, [https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Lifelong\\_-\\_Perceptions-of-Arts-and-Culture-among-Baby-Boomer-Middle-Australians-1.pdf](https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Lifelong_-_Perceptions-of-Arts-and-Culture-among-Baby-Boomer-Middle-Australians-1.pdf).
- <sup>10</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, "Measuring What Matters: Australia's First Wellbeing Framework."