

International Case Studies:

National Arts and Culture Strategy

September 2023

Arts Action Now !!!

Australia – an arts and culture revival

The Australian Government in January 2023 launched a [National Cultural Policy](#)—Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place.

Federal Government support for arts and culture in Australia have waxed and waned. Strategies to support arts and culture have included Creative Nation (1994) and the Labor Government’s Creative Australia National Cultural Policy, launched in 2013. Creative Australia was then scrapped by the incoming Liberal-National Coalition Government. Under the Coalition, between 2013 and 2022 [“the federal arts portfolio contracted and funding stagnated.”](#) While COVID-19 crisis support measures briefly lifted arts funding to a record high, “notwithstanding that interim support, federal arts spending dropped by 22.7 per cent per capita over the ...decade.”

Sector concern about a lack of direction and support for Australia’s arts and culture sector saw increasing calls in the lead-in to the 2022 federal election for a national arts and culture policy.

In 2021, independent arts think tank, A New Approach (ANA) put forward a model for a [national arts, culture and creativity plan](#).

A Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia’s creative and cultural industries produced a report [Sculpting a National Cultural Plan](#) which addressed ‘igniting a post-COVID economy for the arts’.

The Labor Opposition made a commitment to implementing a national cultural plan if it was elected in the 2022 election, with Shadow Minister for the Arts the Hon Tony Burke saying: [‘Labor believes in cultural policies for a really simple reason](#). Without them, you make the wrong decisions. Cultural policies give us a framework in which to develop arts and culture in Australia. They give us direction and momentum. They are a statement of Australian identity.’

[Revive - a place for every story, a story for every place](#)

Following the election, the incoming Labor Government came through on its commitment with a national cultural policy, Revive – a place for every story, a story for every place. The strategy is structured around five ‘pillars’ to guide the Government’s actions and investments.

- First Nations First: Recognising and respecting the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia’s arts and culture.
- A Place for Every Story: Reflecting the breadth of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.
- Centrality of the Artist: Supporting the artist as worker and celebrating artists as creators.

- Strong Cultural Infrastructure: Providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts, culture and heritage.
- Engaging the Audience: Making sure our stories connect with people at home and abroad.

“Revive ... encompasses new opportunities, new technologies, and new audiences, while continuing in our commitment to placing the stories and cultures of First Nations communities at the heart of everything we do.” Prime Minister The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Read more about Revive [here](#).

Australia – arts and culture sampler:

Watch: Utopia (Netflix) The influence of Kiwi John Clarke on Australian comedy (and political commentary) is obvious in Utopia which hilariously charts the struggles of the bureaucrats of the fictional Nation Building Authority. Dan Slevin on [Radio NZ](#) says Utopia is ‘at its heart it’s a classic workplace comedy, getting much mileage out of flaky wi-fi, office recycling, new security systems and the mysteries of ‘HR.’ Season 5 has been launched in Australia – hopefully we will get to see it here soon.

Read: The Welcome to Country Handbook by Professor Marcia Langton. With Australia soon to vote in the [Voice referendum](#), this handbook from leading academic and Indigenous spokesperson Marcia Langton is a valuable guide to ‘precolonial and post-colonial history, language, kinship, knowledge, art, performance, storytelling, native title, the Stolen Generations, making a rightful place for First Australians and looking to the future for Indigenous Australia.

Listen: You’re The Voice by John Farnham. Aussie icon John Farnham has just granted permission for this much loved [1986 hit](#) to be used to support the Yes vote for the Voice referendum ‘and hopes use of song will help ‘change the lives of our First Nations peoples for the better...’ Here is a [link](#) to You’re The Voice in all its glory. ‘This time, we know we all can stand together / With the power to be powerful / Believing we can make it better...’

Ireland – growing international opportunities and piloting a basic income

Ireland, like New Zealand, is an island country with a population of just over 5 million. Given the limited domestic opportunities for their creative sector, it is not surprising that Culture Ireland’s 2022-2025 strategy looks outward to the promotion of Irish arts worldwide.

Culture Ireland [Tá Straitéis Chultúr Éireann 2022–2025](#) builds on 17 years of investment in building international recognition of Irish artists. The 2022 – 2025 strategy extends the achievement of the goals of Culture Ireland’s [previous strategy](#), launched in 2017, with the artist remaining as the central focus.

The strategy vision is a simple but compelling statement of belief in Ireland’s arts and their universal value; Contemporary Irish arts are unique and treasured and deserving of a worldwide audience. The strategy notes: ‘International work is recognised as being vital to sustain the careers of many Irish artists. In our promotion of Irish arts, Culture Ireland is always aware of the critical importance of international audiences and the integral role of the international presenter.’

Operationally, the strategy is framed around the themes of partnership; equality, diversity and inclusion in decision-making; environmental sustainability; and a commitment to measurement of impact and sharing learning.

Alongside the national strategy with its international focus, are 31 local authority Creative Communities strategies designed to support the creative ambitions of [local communities](#). These include ‘a greater focus on health and wellbeing, creative industries, climate action, the development of the Irish language, and social sustainability. Priority will also be given to develop creative opportunities for marginalised communities and those at risk of disadvantage.’ Each local authority is supported by a dedicated local Creative Ireland Co-ordinator. You can read more about Ireland’s Creative Communities programme [here](#).

Ireland has also launched a pilot [Basic Income for the Arts programme](#). This pilot is providing 2000 participants, selected through an anonymised random sampling process of 8200 eligible applicants, with grants to the value of €325 per week (approximately NZ\$590). The grants are provided over three years, no strings attached other than a requirement to take part in the pilot research programme. This article from [the Irish Times](#) provides context for this ‘seismic leap forward’ for Ireland’s artistic community.

Ireland – arts and culture sampler:

Watch: Bad Sisters (streaming on Apple) [Guardian review](#); “This wicked revenge fantasy about five sisters who attempt to kill a monstrous husband is wonderfully cathartic, perfectly paced and hugely witty. Its brilliant cast don’t put a foot wrong.”

Read: My Fourth Time We Drowned by Sally Hayden. This [An Post Irish Book of the Year 2022](#) is “a staggering account of the migrant crisis across North Africa, including dozens of first-hand narratives from people currently living in Libyan detention centres, revealing that they were all incarcerated as a direct result of European policy.”

Listen: [Dvyr – Smoke](#) This [Irish Times list](#) singles out Dvyr for its ‘message of positive queer representation through their vivid electro-pop music...There is sweetness in the vocal delivery as much as there is steely assertiveness in the music...’

South Korea – playing the long game

The Korean Wave (Hallyu) is a term for the international reach of South Korea's cultural economy. The popularity of South Korea’s pop culture, entertainment, music, TV dramas and movies has seen South Korea become the seventh largest ‘exporter’ of cultural content in the world.

Over thirty years, successive South Korean governments have prioritised the development of their cultural and creative sectors. After the country’s first democratic elections in 1990, the incoming government launched “Culture for All”, a multi-year culture development plan to support cultural identity, ‘promote the fine arts, improve access to cultural goods, support regional culture, develop the media culture, and use culture as a means of reconciling both Koreas.’ After the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the government ‘set up a special fund to provide additional funding for the [Korea Creative Content Agency](#) (KOCCA)...to support the production and marketing activities of creative industries, including television and radio broadcasting, computer games, animated series, comics, films, music, fashion design...’ Further policy initiatives included a plan announced in 2013 by the

country's president, Park Geun-hye, to move the country towards a "creative economy." Most recently, in 2022, two months after taking office, South Korea President Yoon Suk-yeol announced a US\$3.7 billion fund for film, TV, art, and other cultural projects.

A [2021 OECD report](#) on OECD members' culture and creative sectors notes: 'Korea's experience in developing the cultural and creative sectors (CCS)¹ has been remarkable and unique in terms of its scale and speed. In the cultural contents industry, including films, videos, games, and drama, Korea has 2.6% of the global market share, which is the seventh-largest in the world, generating about USD\$ 114 billion in sales, USD\$ 10.3 billion in exports, and 680,000 jobs. Moreover, it has been constantly and rapidly growing with an expected continued growth of 4.4% through 2022.'

South Korea – arts and culture sampler:

Watch: My Mister (Netflix). You've watched [Parasite](#) and [Squid Game](#) and you're looking for some more of that Hallyu magic. Try My Mister. [The Best of Korea review](#) quotes Paulo Coelho, author of The Alchemist, on this remarkable show: "It was a masterpiece. It's one of the best works I've seen recently. It shows the intricacy of human psychology and ... it is a flawless description of the human condition".

Read: The Vegetarian by Han Kang. The Vegetarian was the winner of the 2016 [Man Booker International Prize](#). "Fraught, disturbing, and beautiful, Han Kang's novel is about shame and desire, and our faltering attempts to understand the lives of others."

Listen: [Love Dive by IVE](#) This list from Grammy 10 K-Pop Rookie Girl Groups To Watch In 2023 says IVE's Love Dive, "which dominated South Korean charts for months, is a prime example of the "chaebol crush" concept that IVE crafted for themselves: girl crush, but with a hint of royalty."

UAE - on the global cultural and creativity map

In 2021, the UAE launched a [National Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries](#)

UAE's National Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries aims to 'enhance the UAE's position as a global destination for a knowledge-economy based on creativity, innovation, talent and technology.' The goal is to promote the growth of the UAE cultural and creative industries' sector, increase its contribution to 5 per cent of the national GDP by 2031, and increase the volume of exports of cultural and creative products and services. The strategy incorporates initiatives around Cultural and natural heritage; Books and press; Performing arts and celebration; Audiovisual and interactive media; Visual arts and crafts and design; and Creative services.

Abu Dhabi and Dubai in turn have developed strategies to develop their arts and culture and creative industries.

The Dubai approach

Over several decades Dubai has created the foundations for creative economy. Dubai now seeks to accelerate the growth of its creative economy with the [Creative Economy Strategy of Dubai](#). This aim to double the contribution of the creative industries to the GDP of Dubai from 2.6 per cent in 2020 to 5 per cent by 2025, and transform Dubai into an international destination for creativity and the capital of creative economy. Ambitious targets include more than doubling the number of Dubai-based creative companies from 8,300 in 2020 to 15,000 by 2025, and the number of creators based in the emirate, from 70,000 in 2020 to 140,000 by 2025.

Initiatives to support the strategy include the creation of a [‘Cultural Visa’](#) to attract creative talents to live and work in Dubai.

Abu Dhabi has similarly ambitions to Dubai. Read more their culture and creative industries [here](#).

Dubai – arts and culture sampler:

Watch: Dubai Bling (Netflix) [This review](#) from The Washington Post sums up the appeal of Dubai Bling: ‘Few, if any, shows from the Gulf have captured the attention of such an international audience...But the biting mean-girl theatrics, high-quality production and outrageous plotlines of “Dubai Bling” have quickly attracted a large following.’’

Read: [The Sand Fish by Maha Gargash](#). First published in 2009, and set in the 1950s, The Sand Fish is [‘an enticing tale](#) of a fiery, independent woman struggling to live the life she has been assigned in the 1950s in the area outside modern Dubai...An exciting, passion-filled read that illuminates an intriguing culture through the eyes and experience of a feisty heroine.’

Listen: [New Look](#) by Rita Ora. No, Rita is not a Dubai artist but the video for her 2019 release [New Look](#) was shot in Dubai and the [UAE’s The National news](#) notes the video ‘captured the emirate at its most futuristic’ with ‘slick choreography at the Meydan Bridge and in Al Seef... shots showing her cruising down Bur Dubai... and grand shots of Sheikh Zayed Road and a majestic Burj Khalifa.’