

A new National Cultural Policy

National Growth Areas Alliance Submission



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Executive Summary

Outer urban growth areas are home to more than one in five Australians, yet they are under-represented in arts funding, major arts programming and in our national cultural and arts identity.

Growth area residents have less access to jobs in the cultural sector. Growth areas receive significantly less funding for arts and cultural infrastructure and programming than either inner metropolitan areas or regional areas.

Due to this funding inequity, growth area residents are disadvantaged compared to their inner-city and regional peers. Growth area residents are missing out on targeted arts programs.

Greater investment in the planning, design and delivery of creative institutions in growth areas is needed to address the geographic inequity in arts and cultural funding and programming.

Recommendations

The NGAA recommends:

1. Integrating requirements for cultural institutions to be included in strategic planning in outer urban growth corridors nationally, requiring strategic partnerships between all levels of government.
2. Supporting local government in growth areas to integrate arts and culture planning in the early stages of community and economic development of new communities, through a targeted program of education and community engagement.
3. Greater geographic equity in Australia Council and other creative and cultural grant funding, acknowledging the geographic and demographic size of outer urban growth areas.
4. Supporting national arts organisations to tour growth areas, including local resourcing.
5. Supporting local creative learning and jobs, including delivery of relevant tertiary courses in growth areas and investment in cultural institutions that would provide employment and access to outer urban communities.
6. Limiting the requirement for transformation evidence-based data for arts funding in growth areas, where communities and community identities are still in the process of developing.

About Australia's fast growing cities, towns and suburbs

The National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA) is an alliance of Councils from the fast growing outer urban areas around Australia's major cities, where 5.3 million people (20% of the Australian population) liveⁱ. Growth Areas are the centre of multicultural Australia, with 33% of our populations being born overseas, compared to 27% nationally, and a higher proportion of First Nations residents than all capital city averages, apart from Brisbane.ⁱⁱ

We have a shared vision of growing communities that are resilient, liveable and thriving places, where our diverse cultural communities can have equitable access to cultural activities, facilities, education, jobs and institutions. However, this vision remains unachievable until investment in cultural infrastructure and services catches up with our fast-growing population

Lack of Growth Area jobs in cultural sector

Infrastructure Australia’s 2019 Infrastructure Audit showed Australia’s arts and cultural sector supports direct and indirect jobs and generates exports. However, there are only 0.5 cultural assets jobs per thousand people in growth areas compared to 1.6 in metropolitan areasⁱⁱⁱ. Only 1.3% of the Growth Areas workforce is employed in Arts and Recreation Services

Arts and cultural institutions are known to promote innovation and creativity. Creativity and problem-solving skills will be increasingly important for future-proofing occupations to technologies such as machine learning and mobile robotics.^{iv}

Need for integrated planning for new communities

As noted by Infrastructure Australia in their 2019 *Australian Infrastructure Audit*, communities can significantly benefit when arts and culture are embedded at the strategic planning stage.

There is a “geographical dimension to the provision of arts and cultural infrastructure”, with the outer suburbs significantly under-serviced compared to city centres. (Infrastructure Australia, 2019). Cultural and arts facilities and programs in metropolitan areas are not easily accessible to growth area residents, who can live as far as 80 kilometres away from capital city CBDs.

The Funding Discrepancy

Although data on the distribution of arts and cultural infrastructure is limited,(Infrastructure Australia, 2019), we know that funding is disproportionately distributed through Australia Council grants to inner cities and major arts organisations located in CBDs, with growth areas (and regions) receiving just \$3 per capita compared to \$20 per capita for inner metropolitan areas. For example, funding for the major arts companies, such as Opera Australia and the Australian Ballet, made up 62 per cent of grants funding from the Australia Council in 2015–16 (Jolly, 2018).

Geographic location	Sum of Amount Funded	Population	Per capita
Regional	\$15,347,812	4,499,741	\$3
Growth Areas	\$21,156,385	6,493,444	\$3
Rural	\$54,464,935	2,545,457	\$21
Inner Metro	\$240,420,370	11,826,929	\$20

Source: Australia Council via <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/funding/awarded-grants/>

Local Government has increased its funding for the arts at the same time as federal funding has declined. Commonwealth funding has fallen by 19% per person since 2007-08 to 2019 and Local Government has increased funding per capita by 11% during the same period.^v

In growth areas, Councils are struggling to keep up with their inner-city peers and communities who receive roughly more than six times the funding through grants. “As with other areas of government expenditure that don’t keep up with population growth, we risk a decline in the relevance and accessibility of cultural opportunities for people right across the country.” (A New Approach 2019)

Growth areas by their very nature are vulnerable to the expectation of quantifying the arts as an instrument of social transformation. In general, growth areas have higher levels of social diversity, higher rates of unemployment and lower levels of health and wellbeing.

Growth area councils are at a distinct disadvantage when demonstrating evidence of the arts leading to social or economic transformation when their communities are very new, diverse and facing complex challenges. It is hard to provide an evidence base of change for a community still in its infancy, or indeed still in the planning stage.

Growth areas miss out on targeted programs

More than one in five Australians reside in growth areas, however, funding programs are heavily targeted to metropolitan or rural areas. Some examples include:

- **Artbank** procures work from emerging artists across Australia. It does so through exhibition and studio tours and its roadshow which tours across Australia. None of the sites on the 2020 or 2021 tour schedule were located in a growth area.
- **Festivals Australia** provides funding for arts and cultural projects that encourage community participation and audience engagement from people living in regional and remote communities in a festival or community celebration. Growth areas are exempt, despite the fact some growth councils cross over the metro/regional boundary.
- **The Visions of Australia** regional exhibition touring program supports audience access to Australian arts and cultural material, with a focus on tours to regional and remote Australia. While growth areas are eligible, regional and remote venues are a higher priority for funding.
- **The National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach program** aims to bring Australian and overseas cultural material to all Australians through national tours and help tour Australian works overseas. Of the nine national collecting institutions eligible, none are based in growth areas.
- The **Regional Arts Fund** is an Australian Government program that funds cultural development in regional and remote communities in Australia. Regionally based artists, arts workers and organisations can apply for funding for their professional development and creative arts projects in regional and remote Australia.

Case study:

City of Playford: Creative Precinct

The City of Playford in partnership with State Government agencies, South Australian Universities, and participating creative industry professionals aims to develop a state of the art, creative industries live training site in northern Adelaide and leverage off existing council assets and create engagement and employment for young people.

The training site will have global reach with its GiG city capacity, enabling multiple broadcast platforms to stream across the globe and to showcase the unique talent within the City of Playford.

To date, the Northern Sound System (NSS has produced the last two Triple J Unearthed winners 2019 & 2020) Creative Industries Program has developed projects in Gaming and Animation, Visual FX, Event Tech and Podcasting. The program's success is due to strong collaborative practices across government, the not-for-profit sector and industry, coupled with a collective desire to support young people in the City of Playford.

A different path to growing South Australia's creative sector may lie in expanding grassroots production. Such an expansion necessarily requires growth in the pipeline of creative talent from all parts of South Australia — in other words, increasing the number of South Australians who consider working in the creative industries as a potential career, and can be supported by the right ecosystem to do so.

ⁱ NGAA Population Profile accessed on 22/8/22 at <https://profile.id.com.au/ngaa/population?BMID=28&WebID=10>

ⁱⁱ NGAA Population Profile accessed on 22/8/22 at

ⁱⁱⁱ Id Consulting, State of Australia's Fast Growing Outer Suburbs, The Economic and Demographic transition of the Fast Growing Outer Suburbs, 2018

^{iv} Infrastructure Australia Audit, 2019

^v A New Approach: Insight Report 1 - The Big Picture: Public Expenditure on Artistic, Cultural and Creative Activity in Australia. Finding 2, 2019