

Mr Stephen Palethorpe
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
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Dear Mr Palethorpe

RE: Submission to the Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy

Thank you for your email of 29 March 2023 inviting the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (MoAD) to make a submission to the Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy.

MoAD has two important roles: to protect, preserve and share with the public the significant heritage building of Old Parliament. Opened in 1927, and soon to celebrate its 100th anniversary, Old Parliament House was Australia's first purpose-built home of Federal parliament and as a national heritage icon, it is one of the most recognised buildings in Australia.

Secondly, MoAD also plays a critically important role in Australia's cultural life as the only National Collecting Institution (NCI) dedicated to enriching understanding and appreciation of the nation's political legacy and the value of democracy. Through its programs, contemporary exhibitions, events and collections, MoAD contributes to our sense of national belonging, as part of the story of Australia's journey from federation to becoming one of the world's most vibrant and multicultural democratic nations. We share stories in the building where history happened and offer visitors the unique opportunity to walk in the shoes of people who played a leading role in our democratic history.

MoAD welcomes the Australian Government's new National Cultural Policy, *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*. The policy highlights that engagement with arts and culture strengthens social connectedness and wellbeing, and offers a means of cultural expression. At MoAD, social inclusion programming is a central tenet in fostering vibrant, cohesive communities with a deep understanding of civics and citizenship.

MoAD acknowledges the five pillars at the core of the policy – First Nations First, A Place for Every Story, Centrality of the Artist, Strong Cultural Infrastructure, and Engaging with Audience – and recognises the strong framework they provide for cultural agencies to engage with in delivering on their purpose and statutory obligations. MoAD looks forward to playing a vital role in supporting this policy.

As part of the Revive policy, MoAD welcomes the Government's commitment to the arts and cultural sector demonstrated through the funding commitment to MoAD of \$37.9m over four years, and an increase in ongoing funding in future years. This funding will enable MoAD to address critical building infrastructure issues, and

strengthen our historical interpretation, collections, exhibitions and digital engagement programs to share with all Australians.

The Government's funding announcement to invest more than \$535 million over four years in the NCIs also referenced that the funding injection will help position the NCIs to attract greater philanthropy to support their work. MoAD will focus on building partnerships philanthropists, donors, sponsors and supporters to expand its programs and engagement to Australians across the nation.

MoAD also delivers strong in-person student experiences, with over 80,000 students walking the halls of the Museum each year in curriculum-aligned programs that cover voice and agency, media literacy and sustainability. Our ability to connect with these young people not only assists with their in-classroom learning, it also creates empowered students who develop a connection to museums and their cultural heritage that they carry into adulthood. MoAD also has an established reputation for promoting active citizenship through a suite of onsite and online education programs. Museum Educators engage with almost 23,000 students a year via our digital programs, and over half of these students are from regional and remote areas of Australia.

MoAD welcomes the announcement by Minister for Education of the continuation of the 50 per cent increase in the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) amounts for 2023. The PACER program provides financial assistance for students to visit Canberra and experience our national democratic, historical and cultural institutions. Schools from outer regional, remote, very remote areas and disadvantaged schools will now be eligible for additional rebates.

The Revive Policy and the recent funding announcements in regard to the NCIs and PACER program will assist MOAD in meeting its two key functions of preserving and sharing with the public the heritage of Old Parliament House, and engagement with audiences in understanding the strengths of Australia's democratic system and the skills required to participate in it.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Bull
Director

14 April 2023