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Submission:

First, let me congratulate whoever it was who had the idea to discuss national cultural policy. I hope they, the government, the bureaucrats, artists and the Australian people have the patients and the will for actual reform to come about.

The arts in Australia are, in the main, under funded. Who in the arts has the temerity, like the Olympic committee, to ask for 100 million dollars? And why not? Because the arts are not as valued as sport. This is unfortunate as the arts are every bit as important to Australian culture as sport. It is for this very reason that I propose funding for the arts be tied to that of sport. Make them commensurate; make them understood in terms of each other; soon they may both be valued.

On the federal level, a stultifying blend of paternalism and ignorance guides the hand of arts administration. Any intelligent person trying to apply for funding from any of the boards of The Australia Council will not be wrong to assume that the application process itself is designed NOT to encourage and empower artists but to discourage, demean and control artists. Australia is physically just too big and the arts are too complex to be at the mercy of the federal government. That is why I propose we do away with the Australia Council for the Arts and transfer that money (and more) – in a fair and equitable manner – to the state funding bodies. These bodies will be staffed and empanelled by people who know what is going on and where it is going on, and therefore, will be better judges of how money should be invested.

Arts Victoria employ a nice application form that could be made better: Instead of asking an artist to write about his/her 'artistic process' and 'rationale' for making the work – as if these things were distinct, separable - I would like applications for funding to address, in 4 pages or less the what, why, how and when model of explication. This will result in very simple and easy to understand applications. Arts Victoria have a nice one-page budget form that we can let stand for now.