



Image: Joan Cameron-Smith, photo by Tanya Bruckner, 2015

NAVA ADVOCACY TOOLKIT 2019

Amplify your voice this election year and let's make sure that all parties commit to investing in artistic courage.

NAVA's community is over 50,000 strong. Our Members, subscribers and social media community are smart, passionate and engaged – but it's not always easy to know what to do to make your voice heard. So, we've put this toolkit together to get you started.

This election year we're calling on all parties to [invest in artistic courage](#).

And our campaign needs you.

What can I do right now?

1. Share our campaign on social media and add your voice
2. Ask your favourite arts organisations or businesses to endorse the campaign
3. Contact your MP – read on for our handy guides and sample letter.

TALKING POINTS

The visual arts are Australia's number one artform by participation

Artworks are in every room of Parliament House – artists are right there when all the big decisions are made

Policy changes across recent years have disadvantaged individual artists the most

Artists' incomes are declining – and artists' fair pay and IP rights are increasingly ignored

Billions are being spent on new galleries all over Australia – with zero new investment in artists

An investment in artists is a vision for Australia's future

Invest in artistic courage.

SOCIAL, ACTIVIST OR CITIZEN?

You might have only a little time to commit, or you might find that your commitment grows. Social, activist, or citizen-level involvement? It's up to you –

Social



Imagine if all 50,000+ of us committed to one share per day? Use our talking points, our policy priorities (below) and our posts as a guide. National impact: let's do this.

Activist

Write to your local politicians as well as other candidates and let's influence all parties' policy:

What's my electorate? Who's the MP?	What are their values and motivations?	What about my state's senators?	How do I contact an MP?	How do I talk up our local arts scene?
Use the Australian Electoral Commission's Find My Electorate	Watch or read their First Speeches in Parliament	Look them up and read their First Speeches	Contact one of them – or all of them! Sample letter below.	Use Australia Council's Electorate Profiles

Citizen

Stay involved with national issues and your voice can have lasting impact:

What's going on in politics this week?	Which inquiries are accepting submissions?	What's NAVA doing?	What's NAVA advocating for?	What's the plan for after the election?
House of Reps and Senate Dynamic Red	Contribute the artist's voice to current inquiries	Here's the latest NAVA actions and events	Ambitious, fair practices - all this and more	Keep artists' voices strong. Join NAVA.

WRITE TO YOUR MP

Our Members of Parliament want to hear from us about the issues that matter most. Here's a sample letter as a guide – but don't feel you have to copy it verbatim! Tips for success:

- **Make it yours:** Describe your work in your own words. Personalised letters get noticed.
 - **Be passionate:** What does your practice mean to you? What does Australia's contemporary arts scene mean to you? Write with clarity and passion.
 - **Don't risk being ignored:** Offensive or abusive messages don't get taken seriously and completely undermine your efforts. Treat this letter as seriously as you want all artists to be treated.
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Your address

The date

For a House of Representatives Member:

The Hon **FIRSTNAME SURNAME MP** (if they're a minister)

or **FIRSTNAME SURNAME MP** (if they're not)

Member for **ELECTORATE**

PO Box 6022

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Or a Senator:

The Hon **FIRSTNAME SURNAME MP** (if they're a minister)

or Senator **FIRSTNAME SURNAME** (if they're not)

PO Box 6100

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr/Ms/Mx/Senator **SURNAME**,

One of the most important election issues for me and my community is arts policy and funding. As one of many artists **LIVING/WORKING** in your **ELECTORATE/STATE**, I'm writing to request a meeting to brief you about my practice in the context of national issues.

My practice is **THIS** and **THAT**. I work mostly from my **STUDIO** but I also support my practice by **DOING THIS OTHER THING MAYBE**. Making and showing new work is important to me **BECAUSE OF THESE REASONS**.

In your First Speech to Parliament, you spoke about **THIS**, and that struck me **FOR THESE REASONS**.

Australia urgently needs arts policy that's ambitious and fair – because without one, we risk losing culture, talent, jobs, and the local economies they power. Right now the visual arts are Australia's most popular artform in terms of participation. While 98% of all Australians engage with the arts, 30% of all Australians enjoy or create visual art. The arts industry overall contributes \$111.7 billion to the economy, or 6.4% of GDP, and employs more people than the IT, mining and energy sectors each employ. And with audiences growing, multiple billions are about to be spent on new contemporary art galleries all over Australia.

However, the numbers of visual artists and craft practitioners are declining, and so are our incomes – both our overall incomes, which are 21% below the average wage, and the incomes professional artists derive exclusively from creative work, which are below the poverty line and have dropped 19% in seven years. Too often, artists are offered “exposure” as a form of payment, and our copyright and moral rights are too regularly infringed. Despite working longer and harder than ever before, more and more artists are living precariously, it’s taking longer for artists to become established, and the gender pay gap is worse in the arts than in any other industry. We have to act now.

Australia needs an ambitious arts policy that invests in artistic courage. This means:

- Putting First Nations first: on the ongoing advice of Elders and artists, fund the National Indigenous Arts & Cultural Authority ambitiously, implement the Uluru Statement, and action the Fake Art Harms Culture recommendations
- Making fair pay at industry standards a condition of public funding, so that all funded organisations can meet their responsibility. As Chair of the Australia Council Sam Walsh AO said at the 2019 Australia Council Awards: “Our artists should be celebrated – and they should be remunerated accordingly.”
- Increasing the Australia Council’s funding by at least \$25m per year so that vital artist programs can be restored
- Committing to the integrity of independently peer-assessed arts funding as a clear expression of confidence in the expertise of Australia’s artists
- Replacing the Major Performing Arts Framework with long-term indexed Artistic Investment Framework that includes the Visual Arts & Crafts Strategy
- Prioritising initiatives that promote artist self-organisation, strengthened communities and a vibrant independent arts sector
- Committing to copyright reform that enables artists to earn incomes from our intellectual property without threat from ‘content’-trading tech giants
- and there’s plenty more to be done in superannuation reform, tax incentives, a Guaranteed Annual Income scheme, ensuring all arts grants and major art prizes become tax free... I know we’re going to have a lot to talk about.

I’d like to invite you to my [STUDIO/EXHIBITION/EVENT](#) which is about [DETAILS](#) on [DATE](#). I welcome you to say a few words at the [OPENING](#) where you’ll also meet [ARTISTS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS/LEADERS/MEDIA](#) from our [ELECTORATE/STATE](#).

If that won’t work for you, please contact NAVA’s Executive Director, Esther Anatolitis for a meeting. NAVA leads policy, advocacy and action for a contemporary arts sector that’s ambitious and fair, and NAVA’s Code of Practice sets best practice standards for the professional visual art, craft and design sector. I’ve been a Member since [YEAR](#). Call NAVA on 1800 046 282 or email esther@visualarts.net.au.

I very much look forward to meeting you – either at my [STUDIO/EXHIBITION/EVENT](#), or at [LOCAL FAVE GALLERY](#). In the meantime, everything you need to know about artists’ expectations for arts policy is on NAVA’s website at nava.net.au/invest-artistic-courage.

Sincerely,

Your signature
YOUR NAME.

PS: For links to the research that underlies my concerns, as well as NAVA’s call for ambitious investment in artistic courage, visit the NAVA website nava.net.au.