



Image: Richard Bell addresses the media at Future/Forward, Parliament House. Photo: Zan Wimberley.

# NAVA ADVOCACY TOOLKIT: Welcome, Minister Fletcher

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.

Following the recent federal election, we have a new Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts: Paul Fletcher. Now is the perfect time to build a relationship.

Let's make the new arts minister feel welcome!

## What can I do right now?

1. Connect with the new Minister on social media
2. Ask your favourite arts organisations or businesses to send him a welcome
3. Contact the new Minister – read on for our handy guides and sample letter.

## TALKING POINTS

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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?

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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 advise 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 <a href="#">Find My Electorate</a>	Watch or read their <a href="#">First Speeches</a> in Parliament	<a href="#">Look them up</a> and read their <a href="#">First Speeches</a>	<a href="#">Contact one of them</a> – or <a href="#">all of them!</a> Sample letter below.	Use <a href="#">Australia Council's Electorate Profiles</a>

### 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?
<a href="#">House of Reps</a> and Senate <a href="#">Dynamic Red</a>	Contribute the artist's voice to <a href="#">current inquiries</a>	Here's the latest <a href="#">NAVA actions and events</a>	Ambitious, fair practices - <a href="#">all this</a> and more	Keep artists' voices strong. <a href="#">Join NAVA.</a>

## WRITE TO THE MINISTER

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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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The Hon Paul Fletcher MP  
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts  
PO Box 6022  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

### The date

Dear Minister Fletcher,

Welcome to the arts! As one of many artists **LIVING/WORKING** in **ELECTORATE/STATE**, I'm writing to introduce myself and my practice as you settle into your new role.

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 the importance of evidence-based policy, and that's important to me as we look towards the future. 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. 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. The evidence is clear: we have to act now.

An important first step is making fair pay at industry standards a condition of all public funding, so that all funded organisations can meet their responsibility. As the 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.”

Beyond this, Australia needs an ambitious approach to arts industry strategy 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
- Increasing the Australia Council's funding by at least \$25m per year so that vital artist programs can be restored
- 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**.

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](mailto:esther@visualarts.net.au).

Minister, during your years as Chief of Staff to former Minister for the Arts the Hon Richard Alston AO, you led a range of valuable industry initiatives that were developed by NAVA across many years. These include the introduction of moral rights and tax measures for artists, the strengthening of Artbank, and importantly, the introduction of the Visual Arts & Crafts Strategy, that vital state-federal cooperation that supports a sustainable industry and inspires us to do great work. The NAVA Code of Practice was also launched during this time, and it's made a massive difference to my practice **IN THESE WAYS**.

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 and industry development strategy is on NAVA's website at [nava.net.au](http://nava.net.au).

Sincerely,

*Your signature*  
**YOUR NAME.**