

15 - Programs, Events & Hires

15.04

Politics in Arts Policy

POSITION SUMMARY

Arts Capital Limited is dedicated to promoting the arts and supporting artists and hirers in their endeavours to present sensitive, challenging and impactful works. We maintain a neutral stance regarding political parties and movements. While we do not endorse any political party or movement, our commitment lies in fostering arts development and expression, including the artistic exploration of significant social issues.

We provide our spaces to resident artists and hirers, applying a degree of curatorial judgment to ensure that all activities adhere to our safeguarding and other relevant policies. Our goal is to support our residents and hirers as they undertake to present work that can amplify marginalised voices and encourage reflection and discussion, without promoting specific political positions.

And to balance freedom of expression, which we see as vital to the health of our society, with the need to ensure a respectful and inclusive working environment across Ainslie+Gorman, we carefully consider the presentation of sensitive, challenging and impactful works. This helps ensure that individuals can opt out of exposure to potentially triggering or distressing content.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for the use of our spaces at Ainslie+Gorman, particularly for works that may involve political themes, ensuring that these spaces are utilised in a manner that is lawful and consistent with our existing policies, such as our Safeguarding Policy. Additionally, this policy offers guidelines for addressing any incidents that may arise, emphasising our commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all users.

PROCEDURE REFERENCES

This policy is to be read and actioned in reference to:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Venue Hire Policy
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Strategic Plan

POLICY

Guiding Principles

1. Freedom of Expression

As an arts organisation, we value the role of artistic expression in exploring political, social, and cultural themes. Artistic work that engages with political themes is welcome, provided it aligns with our organisational mission and values as demonstrated in our Strategic Plan.

2. Respectful Work Environment

While political themes may emerge in artistic projects, all employees are expected to foster a respectful and inclusive environment. Political discussions should remain respectful and professional at all times.

3. Non-Discrimination

The organisation prohibits discrimination or harassment based on political views, affiliations, or activities. All employees should feel safe to hold their political beliefs without fear of retaliation or exclusion.

4. Neutrality in Operations

The organisation, as an entity, remains neutral in political matters, refraining from supporting or endorsing any political party or candidate. This ensures that our focus remains on the artistic and cultural mission of the organisation.

5. Safe Spaces

Provision of safe spaces not only from a Work Health Safety perspective, clear of bullying and harassment, but also in safeguarding – ensuring people are socially, culturally and emotionally safe to express themselves creatively, without fear of judgement, prejudice, shame or reprisal. The use of signage and trigger warnings is strongly encouraged.

Workplace Conduct

1. Personal Political Views

Employees and collaborators are free to hold and express their political views outside of work. However, within the workplace, political discussions should be approached with sensitivity and respect for differing opinions. Heated or divisive political debates that may disrupt the work environment are discouraged.

2. Use of Organisational Resources

Employees should not use organisational resources (e.g. branding, email, social media accounts, equipment) to promote personal political views or to campaign for political causes. This includes distributing political materials or organising political activities during work hours.

3. Artistic Works and Political Themes

Arts Capital requests any residents, hirers and other artists, using or seeking to use Ainslie+Gorman spaces to present works which are political or otherwise controversial in some way, to be in touch with us to discuss the work before going public so that we can assist with any issues arising under our policies (including this policy).

4. Social Media and Public Statements

When using personal social media, employees and artists should make it clear that their political views are personal and not reflective of the organisation's official stance. Public statements made on behalf of the organisation must remain neutral in political matters unless specifically sanctioned by leadership for approved campaigns or statements of cultural advocacy.

Reporting and Resolution

1. Concerns and Complaints

If an employee or artist feels uncomfortable with political discussions or believes the policy has been violated, they are encouraged to raise concerns with their manager or the CEO. All reports will be handled confidentially and investigated in accordance with organisational procedures.

2. Disciplinary Action

Violations of this policy, including discriminatory behaviour, harassment, or misuse of organisational resources for political purposes, may result in disciplinary action:

- Employees may face termination of their employment or contracts.
- Hirers may have events or activities cancelled without refund.
- Additionally, users who have previously violated this policy may be prohibited from future use of our facilities.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to the evolving nature of political expression and workplace culture.

This policy is designed to promote balance by protecting freedom of expression in the arts, while ensuring that the workplace remains respectful and inclusive.

VERSION CONTROL

Version #: 01

Status: Final

Prepared by: Andreo Esguerra Date: 13/11/2024

Approved by: Lachlan Johnson Date: 13/11/2024