



## Submission to the National Cultural Policy Revive Review

*From: Old Fitz Theatre (New Ghosts Theatre Company)*

17.05.2026

The Old Fitz Theatre welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the review of Australia's National Cultural Policy, *Revive*. We recognise the policy as an important recommitment to arts and culture, restoring confidence across the sector after a period of instability and underinvestment. Its five pillars provide a strong framework, affirming the value of artistic practice to Australia's social, cultural and economic life.

As Sydney's only remaining pub theatre, the Old Fitz is a critical part of Australia's cultural infrastructure. We operate at the frontline of the sector: where artists begin their careers, where new Australian work is tested, and where diverse stories are first told.

In 2025 alone, we delivered 419 performances across 26 productions and 49 activations, supported 1,189 artists, and welcomed 19,975 audience members. Delivered by a small team of just 3.75 FTE in a 55-seat venue, this level of activity demonstrates the scale and efficiency of the small-to-medium sector, as well as the growing demand for accessible, independent cultural experiences.

The Old Fitz acts as a key delivery partner across all pillars of Revive. We advance **First Nations First** through platforms and partnerships that embed First Nations voices within our program. We deliver **A Place for Every Story**, with 50% of works led by CaLD artists and 38% exploring LGBTQIA+ themes. We uphold the **Centrality of the Artist** through meaningful career pathways, including 26 assistant placements in 2025. We operate as **Strong Cultural Infrastructure**, supporting 1,000+ artists annually and achieving high audience engagement, with 86% average attendance across our Mainstage program. We drive **Engaging the Audience** through affordable, accessible programming that is deeply connected to our community.

Small-to-medium organisations are essential to Australia's arts ecology. We build the national talent pipeline, underpin diversity and representation, sustain independent artistic practice, and connect communities to culture.

Despite this impact, our sector faces ongoing structural challenges, including rising operational costs, short-term funding cycles, and an overreliance on underpaid labour. There remains a clear disconnect between policy ambition and the resourcing required to deliver it sustainably.

**Strong Cultural Infrastructure:** To sustain this role, small-to-medium organisations must be formally recognised as critical cultural infrastructure within federal policy. This recognition should be supported by the establishment of a dedicated Small-to-Medium Arts Sustainability Fund.

**Revive** marked a critical turning point for Australia's cultural policy landscape. Its next phase must translate ambition into structural reform. We therefore recommend that the new policy:

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- Establish a dedicated Small-to-Medium Arts Sustainability Fund
- Increase organisational funding for the small-to-medium sector
- Commit to long-term (minimum 4-year), indexed operational funding agreements
- Embed small-to-medium organisations within definitions of national cultural infrastructure

Sustaining small-to-medium arts organisations is essential to ensuring Australians can access and participate in our shared cultural life. The Old Fitz Theatre urges the Government to act decisively to secure the future of this vital sector.

Signed,

Lucy Clements

Artistic Director & CEO



Emma Wright

Executive Producer

