

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO)

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As one of Australia's leading performing arts companies, WASO sees firsthand how culture strengthens communities, education, identity and economic activity. Our next National Cultural Policy should build on the momentum of Revive through investment in cultural infrastructure, workforce sustainability and equitable access to participation. WASO recommends three priorities.

First, Australia should introduce stronger tax settings to stimulate investment in live performance. The sector remains disadvantaged compared to screen production despite delivering substantial economic and social return. A nationally legislated Live Performance Production Offset, modelled on the Producer Offset, would offer certainty for producers, de-risk ambitious local productions and increase employment for artists, technicians and arts workers. As Western Australia's largest employer of performing artists, we support industry modelling led by Live Performance Australia demonstrating the multiplier effect of this type of incentive through increased economic activity, venue utilisation and tourism outcomes.

Second, the Australian Government should significantly expand investment in regional touring through coordinated federal-state partnerships. In a state the scale of Western Australia, touring costs are disproportionately affected by freight, accommodation and distance. Yet regional communities consistently demonstrate strong demand for high-quality cultural experiences.

Last year, WASO delivered its largest regional touring program in decades with targeted project funding - generating significant, yet time-limited, cultural, educational and economic impact across regional WA.

Regional touring should not be discretionary outreach that starts and stops with single projects, but as a core mechanism for cultural equity, audience development and national cohesion. Investment models including Playing Australia should support longer residencies, community partnerships, education engagement, and consider a distance premium for large states such as Western Australia. The work of A New Approach outlines the broader social and economic value of cultural participation in regional Australia.

Third, Australia needs a coordinated national approach to music education in schools and partnership with the states to deliver it. Access to sequential, quality music education should not depend on postcode, school budget or parental capacity to pay for private tuition.

WASO's Crescendo program in Kwinana demonstrates the transformative impact of long-term, embedded music learning. More than a performance program, it is embedded at school, supporting engagement, confidence, participation and aspiration for young people who may otherwise never access instrumental education.

The next National Cultural Policy should establish a National Music Education Roadmap aligned with the advocacy of Alberts' The Tony Foundation and the Music Education: Right from the Start initiative. Priorities should include minimum music education standards, investment in teaching artists, support for regional and low-ICSEA schools, and incentives to create stronger partnerships between schools and Australia's cultural institutions.

A culturally ambitious nation requires sustained and coordinated cross-portfolio investment not only in creative output, but in the systems that enable participation, access and artistic excellence for the benefit of all Australians. Our next cultural policy can secure that future.