

## National Cultural Policy Submission

1470347

Public

Organisation

Darwin Symphony Orchestra



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Darwin Symphony Orchestra supports the broader submission made by Symphony Services Australia / CANZO and wishes to add the perspective of a regional, community-based orchestra operating in the Northern Territory.

DSO operates in a context that differs significantly from many metropolitan organisations. Darwin's outer regional location presents substantial challenges in relation to distance, travel time and cost, both for audiences and for the engagement of external artists such as conductors and soloists. These costs are amplified by the limited scale of the local market and the logistical realities of presenting orchestral activity in the Northern Territory.

As a community-based orchestra with predominantly non-salaried musicians, DSO also works within a different operational model to many larger organisations. Rehearsal and performance schedules are often shaped around musician availability and external employment commitments, typically requiring extended rehearsal periods over a number of weeks. While this presents challenges, it also reflects a highly engaged and committed artistic community.

Audience development in the Northern Territory is also distinct. In Darwin, relevance and connection are critical. Engagement is not simply about increasing attendance, but about creating meaningful relationships with diverse and geographically dispersed communities, many of whom may not have a long inherited relationship with orchestral music.

This has led DSO to think differently about presentation and audience experience, including outdoor and amphitheatre performances responsive to climate and local audience behaviour, as well as education and outreach activity beyond traditional concert settings.

We strongly support greater recognition of arts and culture within broader industry, innovation and research frameworks. Regional and remote organisations are often required to innovate out of necessity, adapting delivery models, partnerships and engagement approaches in response to local context and limited resources.

A future National Cultural Policy should recognise that organisations operate within very different geographic, economic and community contexts, and that flexibility, accessibility and regional responsiveness are critical to the long-term sustainability of the arts sector.