

Submission to the National Cultural Policy *Revive* Review**From: National Independent Theatre Network (NITN)****La Mama Theatre, The Blue Room Theatre, Old Fitz Theatre, Metro Arts and Brown's Mart**

The National Independent Theatre Network (NITN) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the review of the National Cultural Policy, *Revive*. The policy represented an important renewal of national commitment to arts and culture, recognising the essential role artists and cultural organisations play in Australia's civic, social, creative, and economic life.

Australia's independent and small-to-medium arts sector is fundamental to the nation's cultural ecology. Organisations such as La Mama Theatre, The Blue Room Theatre, Old Fitz Theatre, Metro Arts and Brown's Mart play a vital role in developing artists, premiering new Australian work, fostering experimentation, and connecting communities with contemporary performance that reflects the diversity of Australian experience.

For generations, the independent theatre sector has been where artists begin careers, take creative risks, and develop ambitious new work. Independent organisations provide essential cultural infrastructure: creative spaces, producing support, mentoring, employment pathways, and accessible entry points for both artists and audiences. The sector is a key driver of artistic innovation and cultural participation across metropolitan, regional, and remote Australia.

Independent organisations are also central to the delivery of *Revive's* core ambitions. We support First Nations artistic leadership and storytelling, champion diverse and underrepresented voices, invest directly in artist-led practice and career development, and create deeply local, accessible, and community-connected cultural experiences.

Despite this contribution, the sector continues to operate under significant financial pressure. Rising operational costs, workforce instability, insecure funding arrangements, and increasing expectations on organisational capacity threaten the long-term sustainability of independent organisations nationwide. Many are being asked to deliver expanding artistic and social outcomes without the structural investment required to sustain that work.

To ensure the ambitions of *Revive* can be fully realised, the next phase of national cultural policy must recognise the independent and small-to-medium sector as essential national cultural infrastructure.

We recommend that the renewed policy:

- Establish a dedicated Small-to-Medium Arts Sustainability Fund.
- Increase multi-year operational investment in independent and small-to-medium organisations.
- Commit to indexed funding agreements of at least four years.
- Recognise independent arts organisations within definitions of national cultural infrastructure.
- Support pathways for emerging artists, creative experimentation, and the development of new Australian work as core cultural priorities.

Revive established a strong foundation for the future of Australia's cultural sector. The next phase must now focus on long-term sustainability, ensuring independent organisations can continue to nurture artists, foster innovation, and connect communities with ambitious Australian stories for generations to come.

Thank you.

Caitlin Dullard, CEO/Artistic Director, La Mama Theatre (VIC)

Lucy Clements (Artistic Director), Emma Wright (Executive Producer), Old Fitz Theatre (NSW)

Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa OAM, CEO, The Blue Room Theatre (WA)

Elizabeth Rogers and Yvette Walker (co-CEOs), Brown's Mart (NT)

Kieran Swann, CEO, Metro Arts (QLD)