

A New Approach (ANA)

22 May 2026

Office for the Arts

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication, Sport and the Arts

Towards a new National Cultural Policy

This afternoon, in a disused winery in regional Australia, a group of young musicians being professionally trained will perform to an enraptured audience. Not far away, communities gather for the Fish Creek Tea Cosy Festival. Tomorrow night, Opera Australia takes the stage while, simultaneously, hundreds of bands are on tour, meeting their fans in pubs, living rooms and on footy grounds – stages both improvised and iconic.

Across the country – in remote communities, suburbs, regional towns and major cities – filmmakers, dancers, actors, writers, visual artists and game designers are bringing people together, shaping debate, winning recognition and telling stories in our own voices.

This weekend, as on every day and in every week, millions of Australians of all ages will gather together in local parks, libraries, museums, art galleries, concert halls, urban spaces and tiny back allies to celebrate, study, gaze, ponder, laugh, live life and cherish what we have and what we can do.

A New Approach (ANA) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Australia's next National Cultural Policy at a moment of genuine significance. Public policy has helped shape the cultural inheritance we now value: the institutions we treasure, the festivals that animate local communities, and the creative system that sustain artists, audiences and arts workers alike.

The challenge before us is not whether culture matters, but whether Australia is prepared to build the long-term policy settings required for creativity to flourish more broadly – for the entire nation to benefit from its transformative power, and for global audiences to broaden their understanding of contemporary Australia through the work of our artists.

This is a rare opportunity to establish a genuinely modern, whole-of-government and cross-jurisdictional cultural framework – one grounded in continuity, ambition and partnership. Greater investment is important, particularly at a time of rising costs across the cultural and creative industries. But investment alone is not enough. We must also strengthen the systems, incentives and collaborations that allow artistic and cultural activity to have deeper and more lasting impact.

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We must also take to heart the cultural practices that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have sustained through story, ceremony, ritual, tradition and custodianship of Country and make this knowledge and these skills foundational to Australia's purpose, identity and future.

Arts, culture and creativity are not peripheral to national life. They are essential infrastructure for a confident, imaginative and connected Australia.

About ANA

ANA is Australia's national arts and culture think tank. Our work shapes and informs the views and actions of public policy decision-makers and key opinion leaders. ANA's ambition is for Australia's place as a cultural powerhouse to be secure, with an arts, culture and creativity system that delivers for all Australians by 2035. The scale of the opportunity of arts and culture is immense – it is a core driver of flourishing people, cohesive communities, resilient economies, productive nations and connected regions. ANA acknowledges the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and their continuing cultural and creative practices in this land.

In our role as a philanthropically funded, independent think tank, ANA is ready to provide further information about the response in this submission and would welcome the opportunity to discuss. We confirm that this submission can be made public.

Warm regards,



Rupert Myer
Chair
A New Approach (ANA)

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Please note: ANA recognises that 'First Nations', 'Indigenous', and 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' are used interchangeably throughout this document. These terms are used respectfully to encompass the diversity of First Peoples of this country, while acknowledging the self-determined right of individuals and communities to identify using whichever term they find most appropriate.¹

Overview

Arts, culture and creativity are part of the fabric of everyday Australian life. They are core drivers of Australia's economic resilience, social cohesion, productivity and global competitiveness.²

While in 2023-24 Australian governments invested \$8.6 billion in arts and culture (the largest amount in 17 years), investment is not keeping pace with population growth.³ Our population increased by 27% from 2007-08 to 2023-24 while government expenditure in arts and culture only increased by 19%.⁴ In addition, the most recently available international data ranks Australia 25 out of 31 OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries for government investment in 'recreation, culture and religion'.⁵

In 2022-23, cultural and creative activity accounted for an estimated 2.5% of gross value added (GVA) in Australia - comparable to the size of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry, or the Accommodation and Food Services industry.⁶

In an environment of constrained budgets, competing priorities and increased uncertainty, Australia can achieve better outcomes through better public policy that positions culture and creativity as core drivers of national advantage and flourishing people. Australia's next National Cultural Policy (NCP) is an important opportunity to pursue this work.

A robust, thriving arts, culture and creativity system for all Australians means having an agreed **national vision, outcomes and measurements** that support long-term strategic collaboration across governments and portfolios. It also means taking **immediate action** to capitalise on good work already done and seize new opportunities.

ANA recommends that the Australian Government:

Recommendation 1: Develop the next NCP in partnership with state and territory governments and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) **as a 10-year framework for strategic collaboration and adaptable decision-making** with immediate actions to be delivered over a three-year period. This includes:

- 1A. Cultural Ministers and ALGA setting a shared vision** for Australia's arts, culture and creativity system with connected communities, lifelong learning and cultural access and participation at its heart.
- 1B. Cultural Ministers and ALGA establishing national outcomes** that provide clear direction for how actions across the NCP Pillars will achieve the shared vision:

- **National Outcome 1: National collaboration and leadership**
- **National Outcome 2: Sustainability and resilience**
- **National Outcome 3: Strategic investment**
- **National Outcome 4: Inclusive and fosters cohesion.**

- 1C. Cultural Ministers and ALGA committing to shared measurements** that track progress towards a shared vision and national outcomes.
- 1D. Cultural Ministers and ALGA meeting biannually** to drive the implementation of the NCP and its actions.
- 1E. State, territory and local governments embedding the NCP in their own policies and approaches** and aligning funding commitments as required to deliver the shared vision and national outcomes.

Recommendation 2: Adopt a shared definition of arts, culture and creativity, noting that Australia’s culture has been uniquely shaped by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, by the generations of people born in this place, and by the people from all around the globe who have made this place their home.

Recommendation 3: Act on key themes that cut across the five Pillars:

- 3A. Children, young people and education:** Creativity and imagination are skills that are essential to our collective ability to adapt and flourish. Children, young people and education should be at the heart of the next NCP through a sixth Pillar called ‘Creative Learning for Every Child’.
- 3B. Tax reform:** Australia’s tax and philanthropic systems should operate to support a vibrant arts, culture and creativity system. Governments should take a systems approach to reforming the arts and culture taxation system, including implementing ‘quick wins’, whilst also reviewing it to deliver reform as part of the next NCP.
- 3C: Careers, skills and training:** The arts, culture and creativity system needs a workforce to deliver its economic and social impacts. The next NCP should highlight efforts to support lifelong learning and accessible career pathways to realise economic growth, social impact and sustainable employment opportunities.

Recommendation 4: **Enter into a National Partnership Agreement for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games** to develop and implement a program of cultural projects and events that celebrate local, national and international culture.

Recommendation 5: **Pursue immediate actions**, including cross-portfolio opportunities, under each of the five NCP Pillars to achieve the shared national outcomes. These actions should focus on:⁷

- **Facilitating financial inflows:** measures that facilitate investment and grow business income
- **Facilitating operations:** measures that build capacity and capability, increase access to resources and infrastructure, and reduce business expenses.
- **Increasing engagement opportunities:** measures that facilitate access, participation and inclusion opportunities.

Recommendation 1: The next National Cultural Policy as a 10-year framework for strategic collaboration and adaptable decision-making

Recommendation 1:

The Australian Government should **develop the next NCP in partnership** with state and territory governments and ALGA as a **10-year framework for strategic collaboration and adaptable decision-making** with immediate actions to be delivered over a three-year period.

The latest available Cultural Funding by Government (CFG) data shows that \$8.6 billion was spent across all three levels of government in 2023–24.⁸

In 2023–24, state and territory governments' contribution (\$3.3 billion) accounted for 39% of funding and for the first time surpassed the federal government's contribution (\$3.1 billion, 36%).⁹ This continued a longer-term trend where states and territories have generally accounted for an increasing proportion of government cultural funding since 2007–08.¹⁰ Local governments also contribute a significant share of expenditure, consistently accounting for between 22% and 27% annually of government funding between 2007–08 and 2023–24.¹¹

With all three levels of government committed to investing in Australia's arts, culture and creativity system, it is time for a national approach that allows them to coordinate, collaborate and apply their strengths. A shared vision, national outcomes, shared measurements and regular meetings of Cultural Ministers to drive action will realise:

- more effective and better understood use of the \$8.6 billion invested in Australian arts and culture each year by our three levels of government
- long-term, coherent decision-making that creates legislative, regulatory and investment environments that support investment and community ambitions.

An opportunity exists for the September 2026 Meeting of Cultural Ministers to have a specific agenda item to discuss the development of the next NCP.

Recommendation 1A:

Cultural Ministers and ALGA should set a shared vision for Australia's arts, culture and creativity system with connected communities, lifelong learning and cultural access and participation at its heart.

ANA research shows that creating a shared goal or vision for a system is one of the most powerful leverage points to create change.¹² Aligning work, resources and commitment around a shared vision amplifies effort and builds collaboration.

A national vision for the arts, culture and creativity system should reflect the social, economic and inherent value of this system to all Australians.

Recommendation 1B:

Cultural Ministers and ALGA should establish national outcomes that provide clear direction for how actions across the NCP Pillars will achieve the shared vision:

- **National Outcome 1: National collaboration and leadership**
- **National Outcome 2: Sustainability and resilience**
- **National Outcome 3: Strategic investment**
- **National Outcome 4: Inclusive and fosters cohesion**

ANA research shows that national outcomes are most effective when they: offer a holistic view of the system; reveal interdependencies; and provide clear direction that still encourages self-organisation and innovation. In doing so, national outcomes provide the necessary foundations for long-term strategic collaboration and a framework for adaptable decision-making.

National outcomes in the NCP should cover the following areas:

- **National Outcome 1: National collaboration and leadership** – An agreed national vision, framework and principles for long-term strategic collaboration across Australia's arts, culture and creativity system that is supported by the Commonwealth, states and territories, and local government.
- **National Outcome 2: Sustainability and resilience** – A flexible and adaptive arts, culture and creativity system that is equipped to navigate long-term change, seize new opportunities and support sustainable creative careers by maximising international engagement, diplomacy and soft power opportunities via arts and culture, market development, trade, regional development and diverse economic opportunities.

- **National Outcome 3: Strategic investment** – An investment landscape that leverages public, private and philanthropic support to provide stable and diverse financing and resources for the arts, culture and creativity system.
- **National Outcome 4: Inclusive and fosters cohesion** – An arts, culture and creativity system that is accessible, available and welcoming to all Australians, that highlights Australia’s diversity and has First Nations arts and culture at its core.

Recommendation 1C:

Cultural Ministers and ALGA should commit to shared measurements that track progress towards a shared vision and national outcomes.

A robust, thriving arts, culture and creativity system means:

- Australians have a high level of cultural literacy
- arts and cultural activities are accessible to all Australians
- creators, cultural organisations and institutions, and the cultural and creative industries are supported, financially viable, connected and resilient, with bright and sustainable futures
- governments across Australia have the frameworks, partnerships and networks they need to enable a sustainable system that can meet new challenges and grasp emerging opportunities
- Australia is realising the social and economic benefits of arts and culture for communities, audiences and creators.

The NCP should translate these realities into tangible, shared measurements that allow governments to track their efforts towards achieving the national outcomes and national vision for Australia’s arts, culture and creativity system.

Below are examples of what shared measurements could be:

Shared Measurements	National Outcomes			
	1	2	3	4
The Australian Government and all state and territory governments have a current cultural policy, and 80% of local governments have a cultural policy.	•			
All government cultural policies actively address the specific interests of children and young people in arts and culture (for example: developmental needs, education pathways, literacy, community participation).	•	•	•	•
Arts and culture funding increases at the same pace as population growth.	•	•	•	
Australia's tax and philanthropic systems support a vibrant arts and culture community.	•	•	•	
Cultural and creative industries growth in GDP is broadly consistent (+/- 5%) with nominal GDP growth.		•		
Arts and culture sector workers have strengthened pay and conditions.	•	•		•
Cultural attendance and participation rates return to pre-COVID levels and are maintained or increase for both adults and children.		•		•

Recommendation 1D:

Cultural Ministers and AGLA should meet biannually to drive the implementation of the NCP and its actions.

A regular, biannual meeting of all Cultural Ministers and a representative from ALGA will provide accountability for national implementation of the NCP and allow for collaboration and coordination across jurisdictions.

Recommendation 1E:

State, territory and local governments should embed the NCP in their own policies and approaches and align funding commitments as required to deliver the shared vision and national outcomes of the NCP.

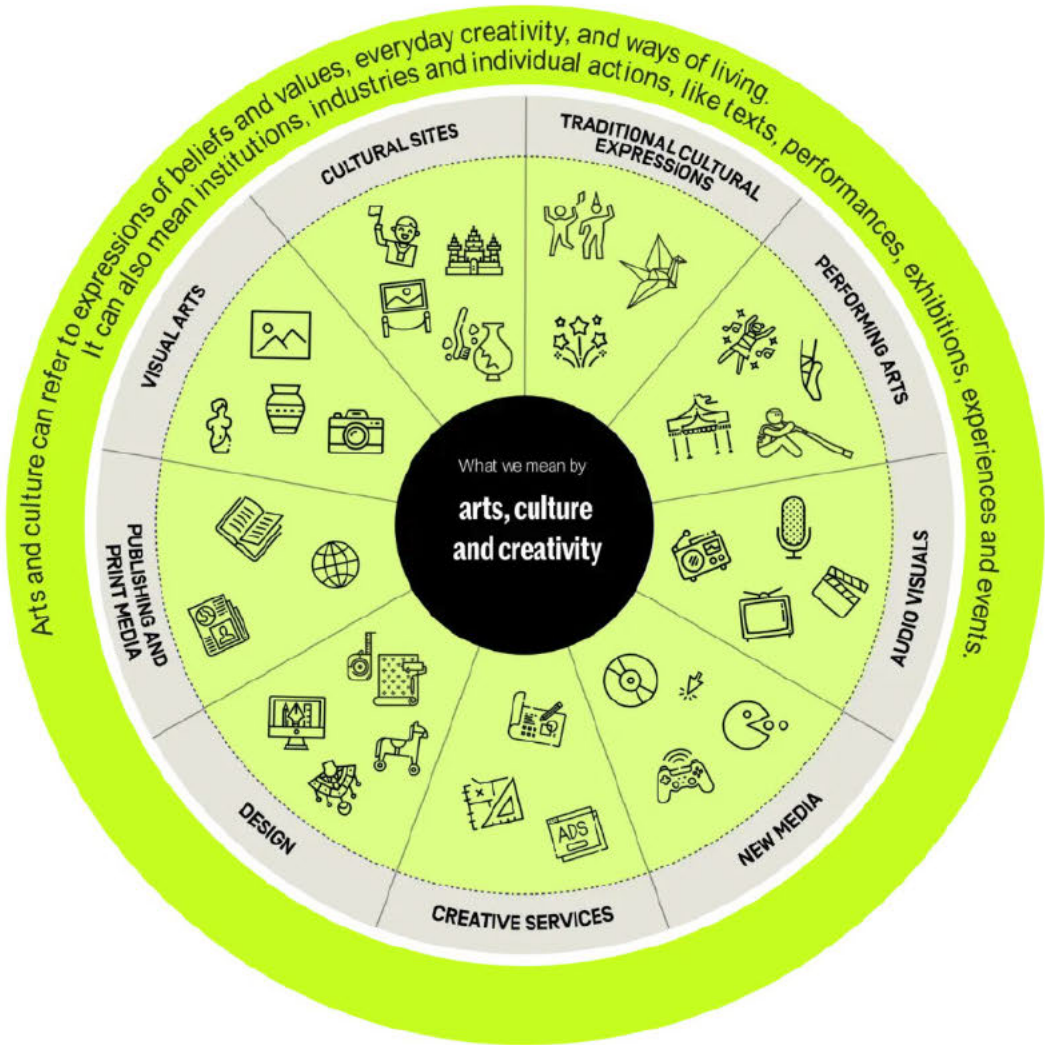
All three levels of government in Australia have an important role to play in the arts, culture and creativity system. Embedding the shared vision and national outcomes at state, territory and local levels makes it clear how each level of government contributes to the system, while also allowing jurisdictions to tailor their approaches to their specific needs and contexts. The national systems-approach also provides the necessary framework to align funding commitments across jurisdictions, so that each level of government plays to its strengths.

Recommendation 2: A shared definition of arts, culture and creativity

Recommendation 2:

Adopt a shared definition of arts, culture and creativity, noting that Australia’s culture has been uniquely shaped by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, by the generations of people born in this place, and by the people from all around the globe who have made this place their home.

A shared understanding of arts, culture and creativity is needed to make sure the next NCP can have a shared vision, national outcomes and shared measurements.



The next NCP should adopt a definition of arts, culture and creativity in Australia that is broad and inclusive and incorporates:

- attending arts, cultural and creative events
- visiting arts, cultural and creative venues
- creating or performing something
- engaging with arts, cultural and creative content in your everyday life
- activities performed in industries and occupations that may be less obvious, such as advertising, design and architecture.

This definition of arts, culture and creativity is informed by both Australian and global definitions of industries and activities, including:

- the Australian Government's Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research (BCARR) ['Culture and Creative Activity in Australia' accounts](#)
- the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) industry divisions of ['Arts and Recreation Services'](#) and ['Information Media and Telecommunications'](#)
- the OECD term ['Cultural and Creative Sectors'](#)
- the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) [definition of creative industries](#)
- the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) [Framework for Cultural Statistics](#).

Recommendation 3: Acting on key themes that cut across all five Pillars

The Australian Government should act on three key themes that cut across all five Pillars.

Recommendation 3A:

Children, young people and education: Creativity and imagination are skills that are essential to our collective ability to adapt and flourish. Children, young people and education should be at the heart of the next NCP through a sixth pillar called 'Creative Learning for Every Child'.

Creative thinking is becoming a global policy priority to prepare young people for future jobs and solving future problems, with governments seeking the best ways for curriculum, programs and teacher training to build this skill. Australia needs a renewed focus at all levels on how we encourage children to engage more broadly with arts and culture, and develop skills in creativity, innovation and imagination, which will be essential to our collective ability to adapt and flourish.

Having a sixth Pillar focused on 'Creative Learning for Every Child' in the next NCP will appropriately reflect the foundational importance of arts, cultural and creative learning and education for all children in Australia. At the very least, if a sixth Pillar is not part of the next NCP, there should be clear actions and success measures for children, young people and education as part of each of the existing five Pillars.

Preliminary ANA research has found that arts, cultural and creative activities in schools and other learning settings are driving outcomes that contribute to national prosperity, cohesion, democratic resilience, and stronger arts and culture and education systems. The student outcomes from evaluation evidence include stronger student engagement, improved attitudes to learning, increased confidence and creativity, better academic and literacy outcomes, and higher attendance.¹³

For example, a recent evaluation of The Song Room program shows that participating schools outperform non-participating schools on most indicators (e.g. student engagement with learning, increased ability to manage behaviour, and gains in literacy and numeracy outcomes). Longer-term participating schools tended to achieve stronger results than initial participants.¹⁴ In an evaluation funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, student attendance significantly improved on The Song Room days, with the largest gains among regional Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, including an 8.1% rise in students with zero absences.¹⁵

For an arts and culture system to thrive, it needs to help create stronger communities. This starts with investment in children and their active arts and cultural participation.

The next NCP is an important opportunity to work across governments and across arts and education portfolios towards the critical national goal of all young Australians becoming 'confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.'¹⁶

Recommendation 3B:

Tax reform: Australia's tax and philanthropic systems should operate to support a vibrant arts, culture and creativity system. Governments should take a systems approach to reforming the arts and culture taxation system, including implementing 'quick wins' whilst also reviewing it to deliver reform as part of the next NCP.

Governments should take a systems approach to reforming the arts and culture taxation system. This will encourage new opportunities, innovation and jobs. Taxation reforms need to work with the private and philanthropic sectors to increase investment, and with creators and the cultural and creative industries to understand what's needed to make the tax system simpler, more coordinated and fit for purpose.

'Quick wins' that are immediately available to implement include:

- Working with the Australian Taxation Office to provide tailored, accessible information for creators and small-to-medium organisations in the cultural and creative industries who cannot or do not access specialist tax advice.
- Making prize money for creative competitions tax-free, as they are closer to a gift or a windfall gain rather than a payment for services. Relevant grant money that is equivalent to a windfall gain or gift should also be considered for tax-free status.
- Offer a standard deduction for individual artists and creatives in lieu of itemising numerous small expenses and keeping receipts.
- Bringing together cultural and creative industry bodies (including peak bodies and associations) and tax advisory bodies (for example, The Tax Institute and CPA Australia) to create education for tax professionals about the arts and culture tax system.

At a systems level, the Australian Government should undertake a review of Australia's arts, culture and creativity tax system and deliver reform as part of the next NCP. This review should draw on recent work undertaken by the NSW Government,¹⁷ as well as work of the Productivity Commission and the current inquiry by the Standing Committee on Communications, the Arts and Sport into arts and cultural philanthropy.

Recommendation 3C:

Careers, skills and training: The arts, culture and creativity system needs a workforce to deliver its economic and social impacts. The next NCP should highlight efforts to support lifelong learning and accessible career pathways to realise economic growth, social impact and sustainable employment opportunities.

Arts and culture has the potential to increase its contribution to significant economic growth, but is being held back by limited pathways and short-term policy. Individuals are either leaving the cultural and creative industries or not choosing this as a career pathway due to limited training opportunities and a perception that it is economically unreliable. The short-term and often erratic nature of funding makes it challenging for the cultural and creative industries to invest with certainty, take calculated risks, create sustainable employment opportunities, and operate more productively. This has a direct impact on jobs and economic growth.

Immediate steps that should be taken include:

- moving towards 10-year operational funding agreements to provide certainty of income that enables investment in workforce, creating stable and sustainable career pathways and reducing the costs created by workforce shortages and instability
- arts, culture and creativity being included in the skills priority list for all states and territories.

Recommendation 4: Brisbane 2032 and its cultural legacy

Recommendation 4:

The Australian Government should enter into a National Partnership Agreement for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games to develop and implement a program of cultural projects and events that celebrate local, national and international culture.

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games are fast approaching, and the scale of the arts, culture and cultural relations opportunity is difficult to overstate. As a Host Country, Australia is required to 'develop and implement a programme of various cultural projects and events that shall celebrate local, national and international culture while also drawing on the Olympic and Paralympic values to engage the widest possible population in the Host Country. Wherever applicable, the cultural program shall be linked to existing local institutions, programs and events.'¹⁸

Cultural programming for previous Olympic and Paralympic Games have had significant benefits for host countries. For example, the cultural programme of the London 2012 Games saw an investment of £126.6 million (drawn from a diverse range of public and private sources and 89% of which went to programming) translate into 43.4 million public engagement experiences across the United Kingdom, with 177,717 activities involving 40,464 artists, and including contributions from all 204 competing nations.¹⁹ This highlights the opportunity for a co-ordinated national cultural programme to translate the visibility of the Games into national and international impact.

The next NCP is perfectly timed to elevate the national importance of this opportunity and ensure that Brisbane 2032 contributes to the delivery of Australia's national shared vision and outcomes for the arts, culture and creativity system.

Brisbane 2032 is not only an opportunity to connect Australia's rich and diverse cultures with cultures worldwide but also a once-in-a-generation chance to accelerate the benefits of arts, culture and creativity for all people in Australia. The cultural impact of Brisbane 2032 will come from both globally showcased mega-events and local activities held in community halls, local libraries and venues right across the nation. Now is the time for Australian governments to act.

The Australian Government should enter into a National Partnership Agreement to:

- develop and implement a program of cultural projects and events that celebrate local, national and international culture
- evaluate impacts of the cultural program on social cohesion, community connection, wellbeing and social inclusion.

Recommendation 5: Immediate actions under each National Cultural Policy Pillar

The current NCP, *Revive*, has seen action taken across all its five Pillars. With this foundation in place, now is the time to build on *Revive* so that Australia's arts, culture and creativity system is not just surviving, but thriving. Sticking with the status quo is a lost opportunity.

ANA research shows that governments play an important role in enabling the arts, culture and creativity system by facilitating financial inflows, facilitating operations and increasing engagement opportunities.²⁰

Recommendation 5:

Across the five Pillars of *Revive*, the Australian Government should pursue immediate actions that focus on:

- **Facilitating financial inflows:** measures that facilitate investment and grow business income
- **Facilitating operations:** measures that build capacity and capability, increase access to resources and infrastructure, and reduce business expenses.
- **Increasing engagement opportunities:** measures that facilitate access, participation and inclusion opportunities.

These immediate actions under each of the Pillars should contribute to realising the national outcomes agreed by Cultural Ministers and ALGA that provide clear direction for how actions across the NCP Pillars will achieve the shared vision:

National Outcome 1: National collaboration and leadership

National Outcome 2: Sustainability and resilience

National Outcome 3: Strategic investment

National Outcome 4: Inclusive and fosters cohesion

Pillar 1 – First Nations First: immediate actions

'... my life revolves around art and culture ... I'm Aboriginal, so everything I basically do revolves around art and culture'²¹

The cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and their continuing cultural and creative practices in this land have existed for more than 60,000 years.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culture is infrastructure. It is the vital, living architecture that sustains life and community, connecting the past with the present and ensuring future generations thrive.

Australians value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and creative practices, view them as the foundation of our national identity and expect them to be prioritised by governments.²² Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts and crafts are of global cultural significance and an important part of Australia's shared identity. They also generate income for First Nations artists and create economic opportunities for communities.²³

An estimated 4,955 First Nations people were employed in the cultural and creative industries in 2023–24, this being 0.8% of the cultural and creative workforce.²⁴ In 2022, the Productivity Commission reported that despite high sales income from First Nations arts and crafts of at least \$250 million in 2019–20, the average income of First Nations artists ranged from \$3,200 (for those selling artwork through an art centre) to around \$6,000 (for independent artists).²⁵

Having First Nations First as a Pillar is a strong starting point for institutional change. In the next NCP the Australian Government should move towards a model that provides greater self-determination and First Nations governance of arts and culture.

From a whole-of-government policy perspective, there are also significant opportunities for arts and culture to contribute to the pursuit of Closing the Gap targets. ANA research has highlighted how arts and culture policy and programs contribute to security, health and education outcomes.²⁶ With Closing the Gap targets continuing to remain out of reach,²⁷ First Nations-led arts and culture work have an important role in progress towards these targets.

Actions – Pillar 1: First Nations First

- **Facilitating financial inflows:**
 - Create a new five-year First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy (current strategy covers 2023-27) that includes a focus on engaging with international markets and audiences, philanthropic funders and private investors to attract new and increased financial inflows. **(National Outcomes 2, 3, 4)**

- **Facilitating operations:**
 - Implement innovative, arts and culture-driven contributions to achieving Closing the Gap targets (alongside ongoing efforts to achieve Target 16 focused on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages). For example, working with the states and territories and education departments on Target 5: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential'; and with states and territories and relevant skills and training agencies on Target 7: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education' and Target 8: 'Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities'. **(National Outcomes 1, 4)**
 - Deliver a First Nations-led arts and culture data strategy that provides First Nations creators and creative organisations, community-controlled and government organisations with timely data for confident decision-making. This should draw on the experience of the Australian Bureau of Statistics in implementing the Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data.²⁸ **(National Outcomes 1, 2, 4)**

- **Increasing engagement opportunities:**
 - Include a First Nations-focused component as a mandatory requirement in the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) program to see students from across Australia learn about First Nations arts, culture and heritage through the national institutions. **(National Outcome 4)**

Pillar 2 – A Place for Every Story: immediate actions

*'It really enriches a place, when there's lots of arts and culture and things to do. You can meet lots of different people – it creates a real sense of community for an area. It's a real reflection of the place you live in.'*²⁹

*'Think what it creates within a community, allowing people to express themselves – even the mental health effects from that – the positive benefits of being part of something and sharing something with other people that you live with or live in the vicinity of, I think is definitely part of government's role.'*³⁰

An accessible, available and welcoming arts, culture and creativity system needs spaces where people can share and experience a diversity of stories, connect with each other and actively participate in their communities.

The ABS's data on cultural attendance and participation show that 59% of children aged 5 to 14 participated in at least one cultural activity in 2021–22,³¹ while the 2025 General Social Survey shows that 48% of people aged 15 and older participated in at least one cultural activity in the previous 12 months.³² A recent analysis of national household data³³ reveals that, for people in Australia, attending 'events that bring people together, such as fetes, shows, festivals or other community events', is the single highest contributor to community participation – other than spending time with family and friends – and attending events is the strongest contributor to civic engagement.

However, two in five Australians say there are no arts events near where they live.³⁴

Creative engagement can foster inclusion and reduce feelings of isolation. It contributes to a better sense of self. Arts, culture and creativity are powerful ways to develop innovation and a sense of belonging. The next NCP should build opportunities for community-led, place-based outreach participation and community-building through arts and culture in regional, peri-urban and suburban communities.

Actions under Pillar 2 should see public spaces used for arts and culture activities, and champion locally led networks to implement programs and approaches that are tailored to the needs of communities and regions. At the simplest level, getting people to participate in arts and culture means organising the right opportunities and having the right places to hold activities. Local and regional networks of arts organisations and creators work to connect people, while schools, libraries, galleries, museums, community centres and other public spaces are trusted, accessible and available locations that can host events.

Actions: Pillar 2 – A Place for Every Story

- **Facilitating financial inflows:**
 - Make place-based funding and investment opportunities led by other portfolio areas such as health, education, tourism (and others) available to creators and arts and culture organisations. For example, Primary Health Networks (PHNs) should work with local arts organisations to design and deliver programs that address local health issues through arts and culture participation. **(National Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)**

- **Facilitating operations:**
 - Support local and regional networks of arts and culture organisations to create local cultural and creative events and build efficiencies through sharing resources and infrastructure. For example, supporting local networks that bring together schools, local government arts and culture officers, arts organisations, First Nations community-controlled organisations, libraries and other interested parties to design and deliver place-based arts and culture programs. **(National Outcomes 2, 4)**

- **Increasing engagement opportunities:**
 - Map cultural infrastructure across Australia so that:
 - individuals and organisations know what opportunities to engage with arts, culture and creativity are available near them
 - governments can identify and reduce cultural infrastructure deserts.

This could draw on work already done by the Australian Urban Observatory³⁵ and the Western Australian Government.³⁶ **(National Outcomes 2, 4)**

Pillar 3 – Centrality of the Artist: immediate actions

*'It is important because it keeps people employed. I mean, people have to be paid money. Money is a great motivator and, you know, they need to get paid for their arts, because, ballet, you know, they've taken years and years of rehearsals and practicing, and they need to get rewarded for it.'*³⁷

In 2023–24, 591,302 people were employed in a cultural and creative industry or occupation.³⁸ In terms of workforce size, this is comparable to industries such as transport, postal and warehousing (4.6%) and wholesale trade (3.8%) and almost double the size of the mining sector workforce (2.1%).³⁹ In 2023, 7% of all businesses were cultural and creative businesses,⁴⁰ and 3% of all registered charities were focused on advancing culture.⁴¹

However, recent research has highlighted that the creative industries face critical workforce and skills shortages, exacerbated by:⁴²

- precarious work conditions (including lack of stable income)
- disconnect between formal education and industry needs
- imbalance between creative and business skills
- technological changes
- workforce exits
- low wages
- limited career progression opportunities and visible pathways.

This is echoed by a recent study by Service and Creative Skills Australia that found that creative professionals face significant barriers throughout their careers – from unaffordable entry-level education and poorly aligned formal training to a lack of mid-to-late career development options. The burden of mentoring new talent falls heavily and unpaid on senior practitioners. Specialist technical skills are at risk of being lost as relevant courses disappear.⁴³

The situation is equally challenging when looking at the specific experience of professional artists. In the 2021–22 financial year, there were an estimated 47,100 practising professional artists in Australia. The typical artist is more likely than the general workforce to be highly educated, with 74% holding a university degree compared to 36% of the general workforce. At the same time, artists are more likely to earn less than the general workforce. The median gross income of artists in 2021–22 was \$44,500,⁴⁴ whilst the median gross income for the general workforce in the same period was \$55,062.⁴⁵ Moreover, while 65% of artists are women, they earn 19% less than their male counterparts.⁴⁶ At a practical level, around a third of artists indicate they have inadequate or non-existent digital business skills, skills developing funding applications, and knowledge of arts-related government regulations.⁴⁷

Anecdotal evidence and stakeholder conversations have also flagged concerns about disproportionately low representation of artists, creators and arts workers on boards and in other key decision-making contexts in the arts, culture and creativity system, thereby missing critical lived-experience expertise.

Educational pathways into creative careers are also under pressure. While Australia has ranked well above the OECD average for creative thinking for 15-year-olds, their level of participation in art or music classes or activities was statistically significantly lower than on average across OECD countries.⁴⁸ Recent analysis has found declining enrolments across Australia in arts subjects (Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts) in secondary schools. The analysis of state-by-state data also indicates a strong downward trend in enrolments in senior secondary ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) arts subjects across almost all arts discipline offerings in each state, as well as a reduction in courses and enrolments in higher education institutions.⁴⁹

This paints a picture of both current and future significant workforce challenges. Actions that can be taken now include addressing knowledge and skill needs in tax, business and law; coordinating efforts to respond to AI and the opportunities and challenges it creates for the creative industries; and reinforcing education pathways and partnerships between local creators and organisations and schools.

Actions: Pillar 3 - Centrality of the Artist

- **Facilitating financial inflows:**
 - Design and deliver practical business and finance education programs for creators and small-to-medium arts and culture organisations. These programs should be designed with creators and organisations so that they address their needs. They should be engaging and easy to access. **(National Outcomes 2, 3)**

- **Facilitating operations:**
 - Expand the number of artists, creators and arts workers on boards and in leadership positions, with appropriate training and support, to elevate the value of lived-experience expertise in the cultural and creative industries. **(National Outcomes 2, 3, 4)**
 - Work with legal and financial professional bodies and Arts Law (the national community legal centre for the arts) to design and implement professional training and resources focused on the legal and financial needs of Australian creators. **(National Outcome 2)**
 - Work with state and territory governments to provide coordinated policy and regulatory responses to AI. **(National Outcomes 1, 2)**

- **Increasing engagement opportunities:**
 - Expand delivery of specialist in-school arts education programs to become national programs. This will draw from cultural and creative sector expertise and create benefits for children, schools, communities and local cultural and creative industries. **(National Outcomes 2, 4)**

Pillar 4 – Strong Cultural Infrastructure: immediate actions

*'In today's landscape, the priorities are about cost of living, health and childcare. These things are critical and all practical. But if you do that at the expense of arts and culture, where do you end up in 10 years?'*⁵⁰

Strong cultural infrastructure relies on strategic and consistent investment in the finances, governance and partnerships of the arts, culture and creativity system. ANA research shows that strong cultural infrastructure and a whole-of-government approach to arts, culture and creativity has benefits for all five areas of Australia's wellbeing framework – prosperity, cohesion, security, health and sustainability.⁵¹

In addition to the strong infrastructure created by the next NCP being a 10-year framework for strategic collaboration and adaptable decision-making (Recommendation 1), the Australian Government should pursue opportunities that provide governments, organisations and creators with the information they need for better decision-making, including:

- pursuing new and expanded data and evidence sources
- supporting the cultural and creative industries to engage with government decision-makers through effectively resourced leadership
- having young people participate in cultural governance.

Actions: Pillar 4 - Strong Cultural Infrastructure

- **Facilitating financial inflows:**
 - Publish a whole-of-system view of financial inflows into arts, culture and creativity to support governments and organisations to make confident decisions about funding and investment opportunities, and to understand how different financial sources respond to different incentives and ambitions. **(National Outcomes 1, 3)**

- **Facilitating operations:**
 - Publish CFG annually and provide more granular detail and analysis of the data to make sure it supports better-informed decision-making by governments, creative organisations and creators. **(National Outcomes 2, 4)**
 - Streamline arts and culture investment infrastructure and processes for more efficient and proportionate funding processes. For example, grant applications should require information and effort proportionate to the value of the investment. **(National Outcomes 1, 2, 3)**
 - Convene a peak body for Australia's arts, culture and creativity system that can coordinate and advocate for the views of the cultural and creative industries. For example, the Chamber of Arts and Culture Western Australia champions the sector's value, influences policy and promotes the role of arts and culture in WA's economic and social life. **(National Outcome 1, 2, 3, 4)**

- **Increasing engagement opportunities:**
 - Implement legislation that requires Australia's cultural institutions to have young people on their boards. This could be modelled on the design and implementation of the *Cultural Institutions Legislation Amendment Act 2025* (NSW) **(National Outcomes 2)**

Pillar 5 – Engaging the Audience: immediate actions

*'It's important to have Australian artists and movies and—so we feel like we can be representing on the world stage. Gives us feelings of pride and identity, of belonging. It's also promoting what Australia is all about and giving that unique flavour that other countries would not be able to experience or understand. It's promoting Australia. Our culture. Yeah. It's a good introduction to the world about us; it's definitely a good thing.'*⁵²

Australia has globally high creative and cultural engagement rates. The most recent results of the 2025 General Social Survey showed that 79% of Australians aged 15 and over had attended a cultural venue or event in the last 12 months,⁵³ while the latest data for children and young people (captured in 2021–22 during the pandemic) showed 80% attendance.⁵⁴ But more can be done to grow new audiences, including incentivising attendance and engagement through taxation and other financial arrangements, and coordinating government efforts to increase digital inclusion.

In addition to domestic audiences, Australia's cultural and creative industries are important international exports. However, Australia does not currently have an export strategy for cultural and creative goods and services, leaving piecemeal arrangements to operate across portfolios and levels of government.

After the COVID-19 pandemic and since 2021, global data has revealed that the creative goods and services trade has experienced growth. For Australia, though, our trade deficit has increased. Using UNCTAD's most recent statistics, ANA estimates that for every \$1 that Australia exports in creative goods, the nation imports \$9.20.⁵⁵

Cultural relations deliver benefits for national reputations, diplomatic encounters and export earnings. These activities form part of the toolkit for Australia's diplomatic influence and engagement. However, the statistics indicate that imbalances remain in Australia's cultural relations. The statistics reinforce ANA's continued policy recommendations for a better cultural relations future through planning, reporting and evaluating for impact as well as considering the establishment of an Australian international cultural relations institute.⁵⁶

Actions: Pillar 5 - Engaging the Audience

- **Facilitating financial inflows:**
 - Incentivise audiences to attend arts and culture events. For example, a one-off payment for 18-year-olds to spend on Australian arts and culture events; taxation incentives for creative organisations to offer discounted tickets to build new markets and reward full venues over exclusivity. **(National Outcomes 2, 3, 4)**

- **Facilitating operations:**
 - Deliver a national Cultural and Creative Export Strategy and whole-of-government approach to international cultural relations to provide the creative and cultural industries with the policy infrastructure needed for greater international market development. **(National Outcomes 1, 2)**

- **Increasing engagement opportunities:**
 - Coordinate efforts across portfolio areas to deliver increased digital inclusion so that all Australians can access, participate in and connect with arts, culture and creativity **(National Outcomes 1, 2, 4)**

Appendix A: Summary of recommendations and actions

Recommendation 1:

The Australian Government should **develop the next NCP in partnership** with state and territory governments and ALGA as a **10-year framework for strategic collaboration and adaptable decision-making** with immediate actions to be delivered over a three-year period.

Recommendation 1A:

Cultural Ministers and ALGA should set a shared vision for Australia's arts, culture and creativity system with connected communities, lifelong learning and cultural access and participation at its heart.

Recommendation 1B:

Cultural Ministers and ALGA should establish national outcomes that provide clear direction for how actions across the NCP Pillars will achieve the shared vision:

- **National Outcome 1: National collaboration and leadership**
An agreed national vision, framework and principles for long-term strategic collaboration across Australia's arts, culture and creativity system that is supported by the Commonwealth, states and territories, and local government.
- **National Outcome 2: Sustainability and resilience**
A flexible and adaptive arts, culture and creativity system that is equipped to navigate long-term change, seize new opportunities and support sustainable creative careers by maximising international engagement, diplomacy and soft power opportunities via arts and culture, market development, trade, regional development and diverse economic opportunities.
- **National Outcome 3: Strategic investment**
An investment landscape that leverages public, private and philanthropic support to provide stable and diverse financing and resources for the arts, culture and creativity system.
- **National Outcome 4: Inclusive and fosters cohesion**
An arts, culture and creativity system that is accessible, available and welcoming to all Australians, that highlights Australia's diversity and has First Nations arts and culture at its core.

Recommendation 1C:

Cultural Ministers and ALGA should commit to shared measurements that track progress towards a shared vision and national outcomes.

Recommendation 1D:

Cultural Ministers and AGLA should meet biannually to drive the implementation of the NCP and its actions.

Recommendation 1E:

State, territory and local governments should embed the NCP in their own policies and approaches and align funding commitments as required to deliver the shared vision and national outcomes of the NCP.

Recommendation 2:

Adopt a shared definition of arts, culture and creativity noting that Australia's culture has been uniquely shaped by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, by the generations of people born in this place, and by the people from all around the globe who have made this place their home.

Recommendation 3:

The Australian Government should act on **three key themes** that cut across all five Pillars.

Recommendation 3A:

Children, young people and education: Creativity and imagination are skills that are essential to our collective ability to adapt and flourish. Children, young people and education should be at the heart of the next NCP through a sixth pillar called 'Creative Learning for Every Child'.

Recommendation 3B:

Tax reform: Australia's tax and philanthropic systems should operate to support a vibrant arts, culture and creativity system. Governments should take a systems approach to reforming the arts and culture taxation system, including implementing 'quick wins whilst also reviewing it to deliver reform as part of the next NCP.

Recommendation 3C:

Careers, skills and training: The arts, culture and creativity system needs a workforce to deliver its economic and social impacts. The next NCP should highlight efforts to support lifelong learning and accessible career pathways to realise economic growth and sustainable employment opportunities.

Recommendation 4:

The Australian Government should enter into a National Partnership Agreement for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games to develop and implement a program of cultural projects and events that celebrate local, national and international culture.

Recommendation 5:

Across the five Pillars of *Revive*, the Australian Government should take actions focused on:

- **Facilitating financial inflows:** measures that facilitate investment and grow business income
- **Facilitating operations:** measures that build capacity and capability, increase access to resources and infrastructure, and reduce business expenses.
- **Increasing engagement opportunities:** measures that facilitate access, participation and inclusion opportunities.

Pillar	Immediate actions		National Outcomes			
	Function	Details	1	2	3	4
Pillar 1: First Nations First	Facilitating financial inflows	Create a new five-year First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy (current strategy covers 2023-27) that includes a focus on engaging with international markets and audiences, philanthropic funders and private investors to attract new and increased financial inflows.		•	•	•
	Facilitating operations	Implement innovative, arts and culture-driven contributions to achieving Closing the Gap targets (alongside ongoing efforts to achieve Target 16 focused on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages). For example, working with the states and territories and education departments on Target 5: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential'; and with states and territories and relevant skills and	•			•

Pillar	Immediate actions		National Outcomes			
	Function	Details	1	2	3	4
		training agencies on Target 7: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education' and Target 8: 'Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities'.				
	Facilitating operations	Deliver a First Nations-led arts and culture data strategy that provides First Nations creators and creative organisations, community-controlled and government organisations with timely data for confident decision-making. This should draw on the experience of the ABS in implementing the Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data. ⁵⁷	•	•		•
	Increasing engagement opportunities	Include a First Nations-focused component as a mandatory requirement in the PACER program to see students from across Australia learn about First Nations arts, culture and heritage through the national institutions.				•
Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story	Facilitating financial inflows	Make place-based funding and investment opportunities led by other portfolio areas such as health, education, tourism (and others) available to creators and arts and culture organisations. For example, PHNs should work with local arts organisations to design and deliver programs that address local health issues through arts and culture participation.	•	•	•	•
	Facilitating operations	Support local and regional networks of arts and culture organisations to create local cultural and creative events and build efficiencies through sharing resources and infrastructure. For example, supporting local networks that bring together schools,		•		•

Pillar	Immediate actions		National Outcomes			
	Function	Details	1	2	3	4
		local government arts and culture officers, arts organisations, First Nations community-controlled organisations, libraries and other interested parties to design and deliver place-based arts and culture programs.				
	Increasing engagement opportunities	<p>Map cultural infrastructure across Australia so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individuals and organisations know what opportunities to engage with arts, culture and creativity are available near them • governments can identify and reduce cultural infrastructure deserts. <p>This could draw on work already done by the Australian Urban Observatory⁵⁸ and the Western Australian Government.⁵⁹</p>		•		•
Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist	Facilitating financial inflows	Design and deliver practical business and finance education programs for creators and small-to-medium arts and culture organisations. These programs should be designed with creators and organisations so that they address their needs. They should be engaging and easy to access.		•	•	
	Facilitating operations	Expand the number of artists, creators and arts workers on boards and in leadership positions, with appropriate training and support, to elevate the value of lived-experience expertise in the cultural and creative industries.		•	•	•
	Facilitating operations	Work with legal and financial professional bodies and Arts Law (the national community legal centre for the arts) to design and implement professional training		•		

Pillar	Immediate actions		National Outcomes			
	Function	Details	1	2	3	4
		and resources focused on the legal and financial needs of Australian creators.				
	Facilitating operations	Work with state and territory governments to provide coordinated policy and regulatory responses to AI.	•	•		
	Increasing engagement opportunities	Expand delivery of specialist in-school arts education programs to be a national program. This will draw from cultural and creative sector expertise and create benefits for children, schools, communities and local cultural and creative industries.		•		•
Pillar 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure	Facilitating financial inflows	Publish a whole-of-system view of financial inflows into the arts, culture and creativity system to support governments and organisations to make confident decisions about funding and investment opportunities, and to understand how different financial sources respond to different incentives and ambitions.	•		•	
	Facilitating operations	Publish CFG annually and provide more granular detail and analysis of the data to make sure it supports better-informed decision-making by governments, creative organisations and creators.		•		•
	Facilitating operations	Streamline arts and culture investment infrastructure and processes for more efficient and proportionate funding processes. For example, grant applications should require information and effort proportionate to the value of the investment.	•	•	•	
	Facilitating operations	Convene a peak body for Australia's arts, culture and creativity system that can coordinate and advocate for the views of	•	•	•	•

Pillar	Immediate actions		National Outcomes			
	Function	Details	1	2	3	4
		the cultural and creative industries. For example, the Chamber of Arts and Culture Western Australia champions the sector's value, influences policy and promotes the role of arts and culture in WA's economic and social life.				
	Increasing engagement opportunities	Implement legislation that requires Australia's cultural institutions to have young people on their boards. This could be modelled on design and implementation of the <i>Cultural Institutions Legislation Amendment Act 2025 (NSW)</i> .		•		
Pillar 5: Engaging the Audience	Facilitating financial inflows	Incentivise audiences to attend arts and culture events. For example - a one-off payment for 18-year-olds to spend on Australian arts and culture events; taxation incentives for creative organisations to offer discounted tickets to build new markets and reward full venues over exclusivity.		•	•	•
	Facilitating operations	Deliver a national Cultural and Creative Export Strategy and whole-of-government approach to international cultural relations to provide the creative and cultural industries with the policy infrastructure needed for greater international market development.	•	•		
	Increasing engagement opportunities	Coordinate efforts across portfolio areas to deliver increased digital inclusion so that all Australians can access, participate in and connect with arts, culture and creativity.	•	•		•

Appendix B: ANA Roundtables

Along with ANA's regular and ongoing consultations, between March and May 2026, ANA hosted seven in-person and virtual roundtables with stakeholders across the arts, culture and creativity system to discuss the next NCP. These conversations have helped to inform ANA's approach and submission.

This Appendix outlines the roundtable attendees and the key themes and perspectives that were shared.

Roundtable attendees

Name	Organisation
	Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts
	ACMI
	Art Gallery New South Wales
	Art Gallery of Western Australia
	Arts and Culture Trust WA
	Arts and Culture Trust WA
	Australian Ballet
	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
	Australian Local Government Association
	Australian Museum
	Bangarra Dance Theatre
	BighART
	Black Swan State Theatre Company
	Blacktown Arts
	Brisbane Festival
	Brisbane Festival
	Carriageworks
	Centre for Australia-India Relations
	Chair, Arts Centre Melbourne
	Chamber of Arts and Culture Western Australia
	Chamber of Arts and Culture Western Australia
	Circa
	Creative Australia
	Dancenorth
	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Name	Organisation
	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts
	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
	Euphorium
	Form
	Foundation for Young Australians
	Geelong Arts Centre
	Heide + Bell Shakespeare
	Ian Potter Foundation
	International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies
	La Boite Theatre
	MAPCO
	Melbourne Fringe Festival
	Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
	Melbourne Theatre Company
	Minderoo
	Minderoo
	Minderoo
	Minderoo
	Museum of Contemporary Art
	Museums Victoria
	National Art School
	National Gallery of Victoria
	National Library Australia
	National Museum of Australia
	National Portrait Gallery (NPG)
	Opera Queensland
	Opera Queensland
	Perth Design Week
	Perth Festival
	Productivity Commission
	Queensland Art Gallery Gallery of Modern Art
	Queensland Museum
	Queensland Museum
	Queensland Performing Arts Centre
	Queensland Performing Arts Centre
	Queensland Symphony Orchestra
	Queensland Theatre Company
	Queensland Theatre Company
	Regional Arts Australia

Name	Organisation
	Regional Arts WA
	Regional Australia Institute
	Screen Queensland
	Screen Queensland
	Snap Inc.
	Spare Parts
	Spear Foundation
	State Library of Queensland
	State Library Victoria
	Sydney Opera House
	The Australian National University
	The Myer Foundation
	The Myer Foundation
	The National Institute of Dramatic Art
	The Queensland Music Festival
	Tim Fairfax Family Foundation
	Tim Fairfax Family Foundation
	University of Melbourne Arts + Culture
	University of Sydney
	UWA
	West Australian Ballet
	West Australian Ballet
	Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip
	Western Australian Opera
	Western Australian Opera
	Western Australian Symphony Orchestra

Roundtable key themes and perspectives

Collaboration, coordination and shared goals:

- NCP review and refresh is bigger than any single point of view and provides real opportunity for finding commonality. Recognition, however, that arts and culture sectors are still disparate and fragmented – need for a more concerted, collaborative national approach.
- A call for governments to take on a systems approach to arts and culture.
- Governments often have greater powers and influence than simply their ability to directly fund programs and projects.
- By being clear about shared goals (be that growing audiences, improving education, championing community connection, creating workforces etc) governments can use

their powers efficiently and in a coordinated way to deliver results for the sector and for everyday Australians.

Children, including engagement and education:

- We need a renewed focus at all levels on how we encourage children to focus more broadly on arts and culture, and develop skills in creativity and imagination, which will be essential to our collective ability to adapt and flourish.
- Different views about whether a specific pillar or embedding this theme were expressed. However, a common view was that we need to focus on children in the next NCP.

Social cohesion and belonging:

- Creative engagement can foster inclusion and reduce feelings of isolation. It contributes to a better sense of self.
- There are great opportunities for outreach participation and community-building through arts and culture, particularly in regional communities.
- Arts and culture is a powerful way to develop innovation and a sense of belonging.

Access, audiences and community:

- There is a need for a thriving arts and culture system helping create stronger communities and this starts with investment into children and their participation. Burden of this can be accepted by arts and culture system but needs resourcing alongside a pipeline for training more specialist teachers.
- Regional and remote access and equity concerns raised and lack of capital infrastructure felt to be a barrier.
- A thriving arts and culture system needs audiences who are engaged and can easily access arts and culture in their communities. Greater community engagement with arts and culture supports increased levels of trust and belonging, and growing audiences expands the reach of Australian arts and culture.
- Governments have a role in both supporting audience growth, as well as on-the-ground community engagement.

First Nations First:

- Need to have the commitment to First Nations backed up with investment and policy.
- The current policy does not recognise the diversity in the many First Nations peoples across the country - one size doesn't fit all.

Workforce and career pathways:

- There is an ageing arts and culture workforce, but people are not choosing to enter current education and skills pathways as they do not see sustainable careers in the arts and culture system. This has immediate and longer-term impacts on jobs and economic growth, as we are not equipping young people and students with the foundational skills to pursue these careers.

- Arts and culture could contribute to significant economic growth, however people are either leaving the cultural and creative industries or not choosing this as a career pathway due to limited training opportunities and a perception that it is economically unreliable.
- The short-term and often erratic nature of funding makes it challenging for industry to invest with certainty, take calculated risks, create sustainable employment opportunities, and operate more productively. This has a direct impact on jobs and economic growth.

Data, research and evidence:

- Organisations are eager for data, research and evidence that helps them talk about the impact of arts and culture - be that the inherent value of arts and culture, or its economic and social impacts.
- The value of arts and culture is central to Australia's national identity, and we need to elevate discussions to this level.
- A general feeling that key decision-makers often do not understand the role and value of a thriving arts and culture system across the whole of a person's and a community's life cycle.

Taxation reform (including offsets):

- Governments should take a systems approach to reforming the arts and culture taxation system. This will encourage new opportunities, innovation and jobs.
- Taxation reforms need to work with the private and philanthropic sectors to increase investment, as governments cannot do it alone. The system needs to be simple and coordinated.

Appendix C: ANA Research

ANA's research and analysis provides relevant, evidence-informed perspectives on Australia's arts, culture and creativity system. This Appendix provides a summary of key publications that have informed ANA's submission and can directly contribute to the creation of the next NCP.

[The Big Picture](#)

- This interactive report provides analysis of the latest Cultural Funding by Government (CFG) data, including overall spend by the three levels of government, and how this is divided across different arts and cultural activities, and between capital and recurrent funding.
- The [Policy Action Brief](#) provides a quick snapshot of key opportunities and key findings.

[The arts, culture and creativity system in Australia: How it ticks](#)

- This report explains the system that delivers arts and cultural experiences in Australia, from broad and grassroots through to specialised and professional. It includes visual summaries of different aspects of Australia's arts, culture and creativity system - including value generation, governance, and cultural literacy and creative skill development pathways. It also outlines 12 systems change levers and how they can be used in the arts, culture and creativity system.

[Government, Culture and Creativity: It's about more than just funding](#)

- This Insight Report looks at how governments can use their powers and functions beyond direct funding to facilitate financial inflows, facilitate operations, and increase engagement opportunities in the arts, culture and creativity system.

[Transformative Edge 2024](#)

- This Insight Report highlights how arts, culture and creativity impact the five themes in Australia's wellbeing framework (Measuring What Matters) - prosperity, cohesion, security, health and sustainability.

[Imagine 2035](#)

- ANA's Position Paper shows that a robust arts and culture system that delivers for all Australians is within our reach, and explores what it will take for Australia to become a cultural powerhouse by 2035.

Endnotes

¹ ANA gratefully acknowledges the contribution of Daniel Riley, Artistic Director, Australian Dance Theatre, in considering ANA's submission and providing this disclaimer.

² See: Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding, and Sari Rossi, '[Transformative Edge 2024: How arts, culture and creativity impact our prosperity, cohesion, security, health and sustainability](#)', Insight Report 2024-03 (Canberra: A New Approach, October 2024). See also: Kate Fielding, Angela Vivian, Sari Rossi, '[Accelerate: Reframing culture's role in productivity](#)', Insight report 2023-03 (Canberra: A New Approach, November 2023).

³ [The Big Picture](#) (2026), Finding 1 and Finding 2

⁴ [The Big Picture](#) (2026), Finding 2

⁵ [The Big Picture](#) (2026), Finding 8. The most recent OECD data is for 2023. In 2021, Australia ranked 26 out of 33 OECD countries.

⁶ Sari Rossi, Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding. June 2025. '[Government, Culture and Creativity: It's about more than just funding.](#)' Insight Report no. 2025-01. Produced by A New Approach (ANA). Canberra, Australia, page 32

⁷ Sari Rossi, Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding. June 2025. '[Government, Culture and Creativity: It's about more than just funding.](#)' Insight Report no. 2025-01. Produced by A New Approach (ANA). Canberra, Australia, page 8 (Finding 3)

⁸ [The Big Picture](#) (2026), Finding 1

⁹ [The Big Picture](#) (2026), Figure 12

¹⁰ [The Big Picture](#) (2026), Figure 13

¹¹ [The Big Picture](#) (2026), Figures 12 and 13

¹² Angela Vivian and Kate Fielding. November 2025. '[The arts, culture and creativity system in Australia: How it ticks.](#)' Insight Report no. 2025-02. Produced by A New Approach (ANA). Canberra, Australia, page 9 (Finding 2)

¹³ This ANA research will be published later in 2026.

¹⁴ The Song Room, '[Bridging the Gap in School Achievement through the Arts.](#)' Abbotsford Victoria, 2011

¹⁵ Tanya Vaughan, '[Transforming Indigenous Education through the Arts.](#)' The Song Room, n.d. Accessed January 6, 2026

¹⁶ [Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration 2019](#) – Goal 2

¹⁷ NSW Government, [The Art of Tax Reform: Unlocking opportunities to improve taxation for Australian creative industries](#)

¹⁸ International Olympic Committee, [‘Olympic Host Contract – Operational Requirements’](#) (October 2022) pages 56-58

¹⁹ Dr Beatriz Garcia and Tamsin Cox, ‘London 2012 Cultural Olympiad Evaluation: Executive Summary’ (25 April 2013), page 11-12

²⁰ Sari Rossi, Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding. June 2025. [‘Government, Culture and Creativity: It’s about more than just funding.’](#) Insight Report no. 2025-01. Produced by A New Approach (ANA). Canberra, Australia, page 8 (Finding 3)

²¹ Quote from young Middle Australian focus group participant. Jodie-Lee Trembath, Kate Fielding, August 2021. [‘The next generation of voters: Young middle Australians talk arts, culture and creativity’](#). Insight Series. Paper no. 2021-02. Produced by A New Approach (ANA). Canberra, Australia, page 23

²² Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding, September 2022. [‘Lifelong: Perceptions of Arts and Culture among Baby Boomer Middle Australians’](#). Insight report no. 2022-02. Produced by A New Approach (ANA). Canberra, Australia, page 30.

²³ [ANA submission](#) to Productivity Commission Inquiry into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts and Craft (January 2021)

²⁴ Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research, [‘Frequently Asked Questions: Measuring Australia’s Cultural and Creative Workforce, 2008-09 to 2023-24 \(Interim Report\)’](#) (December 2025)

²⁵ Productivity Commission, [‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Visual Arts and Crafts Study Report’](#) (Canberra, 2022), page 5

²⁶ Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding, and Sari Rossi, [‘Transformative Edge 2024: How arts, culture and creativity impact our prosperity, cohesion, security, health and sustainability’](#), Insight Report 2024-03 (Canberra: A New Approach, October 2024)

²⁷ Productivity Commission, [‘New Closing the Gap data shows mixed progress’](#), Media release: 18 March 2026

²⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, [‘Governance of Indigenous Data Framework’](#)

²⁹ Quote from Middle Australian focus group participant. Kate Fielding and Jodie-Lee Trembath. May 2020. [‘A view from middle Australia: Perceptions of arts, culture and creativity.’](#) Produced by A New Approach, Canberra, page 17

³⁰ Quote from young Middle Australian focus group participant. Jodie-Lee Trembath, Kate Fielding, August 2021. [‘The next generation of voters: Young middle Australians talk arts, culture and](#)

[creativity](#)'. Insight Series. Paper no. 2021-02. Produced by A New Approach (ANA). Canberra, Australia, page 41

³¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, '[Cultural and creative activities: statistics about participation in and attendance at selected cultural and creative activities, for adults and children \(aged 5-14 years\)](#)'

³² Australian Bureau of Statistics, '[General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia](#)'

³³ Roger Wilkins et al., '[The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 22](#)' (2024), page 170-72

³⁴ Creative Australia, '[Creating Value: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey](#)', last modified 19 September 2023

³⁵ [Australian Urban Observatory](#)

³⁶ Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (WA), '[Western Australia cultural Infrastructure Map](#)'

³⁷ Quote from baby boomer Middle Australian focus group participant. Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding, September 2022. '[Lifelong: Perceptions of Arts and Culture among Baby Boomer Middle Australians](#)'. Insight report no. 2022-02. Produced by A New Approach (ANA). Canberra, Australia, page 21

³⁸ Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research, '[Frequently Asked Questions: Measuring Australia's Cultural and Creative Workforce, 2008-09 to 2023-24 \(Interim Report\)](#)' (December 2025) page 4

³⁹ Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research, '[Frequently Asked Questions: Measuring Australia's Cultural and Creative Workforce, 2008-09 to 2023-24 \(Interim Report\)](#)' (December 2025); Jobs and Skills Australia, '[Mining](#)' (April 2026)

⁴⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, '[Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits](#)' (2023), accessed 17 April 2026

⁴¹ Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, '[Australian Charities Report - 11th Edition: Charity Data Explorer](#).' (2025), accessed 17 April 2025

⁴² Creative Australia, '[Creative Workforce Scoping Study - Summary Report](#)' (n.d.), accessed 20 May 2025

⁴³ Creative Australia, '[Creative Workforce Scoping Study - Summary Report](#)' (n.d.), accessed 20 May 2025

⁴⁴ David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya, '[Artists as Workers: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia](#)', (2024) - interactive dashboards

⁴⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, '[Personal Income in Australia](#),' accessed 17 April 2026

⁴⁶ David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya, '[Artists as Workers: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia](#)', (2024)

⁴⁷ David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya, '[Artists as Workers: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia](#)', (2024)

⁴⁸ OECD. [PISA 2022 Results \(Volume III\): Creative Minds, Creative Schools](#). OECD, 2024. In terms of secondary education, the OECD's 2024 report focussing on performance in creative thinking, reported that around 25% of Australian 15-year-olds participated in Art classes or activities at least once a week (25.4%) and just under 20% participated in Music classes or activities at least once a week (19.5%). This level of participation was statistically significantly lower than on average across OECD countries.

⁴⁹ Sandra Gattenhof and John Nicholas Saunders. '[The Polycrisis for Arts and Creative Education in Australia](#).' *Australian Journal of Education*, 30 January 2026

⁵⁰ Quote from baby boomer Middle Australian focus group participant. Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding, September 2022. '[Lifelong: Perceptions of Arts and Culture among Baby Boomer Middle Australians](#)'. Insight report no. 2022-02. Produced by A New Approach (ANA). Canberra, Australia, page 26

⁵¹ Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding, and Sari Rossi, '[Transformative Edge 2024: How arts, culture and creativity impact our prosperity, cohesion, security, health and sustainability](#)', Insight Report 2024-03 (Canberra: A New Approach, October 2024)

⁵² Quote from Middle Australian focus group participant. Kate Fielding and Jodie-Lee Trembath. May 2020. '[A view from middle Australia: Perceptions of arts, culture and creativity](#).' Produced by A New Approach, Canberra, page 33

⁵³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, '[General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia](#)'

⁵⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, '[Cultural and creative activities: statistics about participation in and attendance at selected cultural and creative activities, for adults and children \(aged 5-14 years\)](#)'

⁵⁵ Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding, and Sari Rossi, '[Transformative Edge 2024: How arts, culture and creativity impact our prosperity, cohesion, security, health and sustainability](#)', Insight Report 2024-03 (Canberra: A New Approach, October 2024) page 45

⁵⁶ Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding, and Sari Rossi, '[Transformative Edge 2024: How arts, culture and creativity impact our prosperity, cohesion, security, health and sustainability](#)', Insight Report 2024-03 (Canberra: A New Approach, October 2024) page 45

⁵⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, '[Governance of Indigenous Data Framework](#)'

⁵⁸ [Australian Urban Observatory](#)

⁵⁹ Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (WA), '[Western Australia cultural Infrastructure Map](#)'