

National Cultural Policy Submission

1471301

Public

Organisation

Adelaide International Jazz Festival



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

ABOUT AIJF

The Adelaide International Jazz Festival (AIJF) celebrates the world-renowned art form of jazz and showcases the abundance of jazz talent in South Australia (SA). It creates audience-building and paid performance opportunities for local and national jazz musicians, and strengthens Adelaide's UNESCO City of Music designation.

Initially known as the Adelaide Jazz Festival (AJF), the inaugural festival was held in April 2023, with subsequent festivals held in April 2024 and April 2025.

A strategic shift saw AJF become the Adelaide International Jazz Festival (AIJF) and move to October from 2026 onward. This aligns with jazz festivals in Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane and Sydney, enabling AIJF to bring more world-class performers to SA audiences and build SA's cultural profile internationally.

In addition, one-off presentations of national and international jazz talent are hosted at other times of year under the "AIJF Presents" banner.

AIJF became an incorporated association in SA in 2024 and is currently close to securing Australian Not for Profits and Charities Commission registration and Deductible Gift Recipient status. These are important foundations for establishing AIJF as a sustainable and integral part of SA's cultural ecosystem.

PILLAR 4 – STRONG INSTITUTIONS

As a fledgling organisation with a volunteer board and paid staff limited to 0.2 FTE, our greatest challenge is financing staff and the resources required to build a foundation for long-term financial sustainability.

For the first 3 festivals, one-off grants were the principal funding source, representing approximately 75% of total income (the remainder being predominantly ticket sales). Such a heavy dependence on project-linked annual grants locks organisations like AIJF into a cycle of precarity: programming decisions must await grant outcome announcements, limiting forward planning and promotion. Grant applications and acquittals are labour-intensive, reducing capacity to actively pursue other revenue streams, such as philanthropic and sponsorship support.

We do not yet qualify for existing multi-year funding options such as Music Australia's Core Contribution Fund (which excludes festivals) and Creative Australia's Four Year Investment for Organisations (requires turnover of \$100k+ p.a.). While our 3-year strategic plan includes a focus on diversifying income streams through philanthropy and sponsorship, this is labour-intensive and requires skilled artists.

The administrative and compliance requirements of non-profits continue to grow. However, existing grants tend to exclude expenditure on operations, which is also not an attractive proposition for philanthropy or sponsorship. As a consequence, this work is often unpaid or not done adequately, which presents significant organisational risk.

The most impactful way that Creative Australia could strengthen organisations such as AIJF is to provide multi-year operational grants to smaller organisations, supporting them to build strong foundations for a sustainable future. Such development grants, for a minimum of 3 years, would provide the certainty needed to plan ahead, take creative and programming risks, and strategically pursue diversified revenue streams. By giving organisations the space to break the cycle of precarity, their dependence on grants should eventually reduce.

Therefore such a developmental grant funding program would represent good public value in the medium to long term.