

The Brisbane International Jazz Festival (BIJF) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of Australia's next National Cultural Policy.

As Queensland's only international jazz festival, BIJF believes the next stage of national cultural policy must place greater emphasis on long-term cultural infrastructure, international engagement, and sustainable support for organisations that create broad sector impact.

For more than two decades, BIJF has connected Queensland artists and audiences with the highest levels of contemporary jazz practice. Through performances, commissions, workshops, collaborations, and educational activities, the festival creates meaningful pathways between local artists and the global jazz community while giving Queensland audiences access to major international artists and new original work that would otherwise rarely be experienced locally.

Importantly, this exchange is not one-directional. Festivals such as BIJF also create opportunities for Australian artists to export their work, establish national and international professional relationships, and strengthen Australia's cultural standing globally. These networks are critical to the future sustainability of Australian music and to retaining creative talent within Australia.

The consultation paper highlights the importance of strong cultural infrastructure and Australia's ability to connect with international markets and audiences. We strongly support this direction. However, from our experience, there remains a significant gap between project-based support and the long-term investment required to sustain organisations that operate within national and international cultural networks.

Comparable jazz festivals in Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth receive substantial state and local government support, enabling them to maintain staffing, partnerships, data collection, strategic planning, and international engagement. In Queensland, organisations such as BIJF continue to operate largely through volunteer labour despite delivering outcomes that align strongly with national cultural priorities including audience engagement, skills development, cultural tourism, international exchange, and support for Australian artists.

As a volunteer-led organisation, BIJF also faces significant structural barriers when applying for major organisational funding. Preparing competitive large-scale funding applications increasingly requires extensive audience data, economic modelling, strategic planning documentation, staffing capacity, and long-term reporting frameworks. This creates a difficult cycle for emerging or unsupported organisations. Festivals that have historically received funding are able to maintain the staffing and infrastructure needed to prepare highly competitive applications, while organisations such as BIJF, despite being highly valued within the national and international jazz community, face major challenges finding the time, resources, and administrative capacity required to compete at the same level.

This challenge is particularly pronounced in Queensland, where independent jazz organisations have historically struggled to maintain visibility and advocacy within the broader funding and policy landscape. As a result, significant cultural activity and international engagement are often delivered without the operational support structures available in other Australian states.

The next National Cultural Policy should recognise that festivals and presenting organisations are not simply events. They are cultural infrastructure. They create ecosystems that connect artists, audiences, venues, educators, communities, and industry networks over long periods of time.

We believe future policy settings should:

- support long-term operational sustainability, not solely short-term project funding
- recognise the importance of international cultural exchange and export pathways for Australian artists
- strengthen partnerships between government, festivals, venues, education providers, and industry organisations
- support audience development and regional and community engagement through live performance
- continue investing in diversity, accessibility, and new Australian work
- acknowledge the important role volunteer-led organisations continue to play within Australia's cultural ecology

The consultation paper also recognises that younger audiences are engaging with culture in new and evolving ways. Festivals such as BIJF provide direct opportunities for emerging artists and audiences to engage with national and international creative practice through workshops, open rehearsals, collaborations, and live performance experiences that cannot be replicated digitally.

Australia's cultural identity is strengthened when local stories are placed within an international context. Festivals create spaces where Australian creativity can be shared confidently with the world while also bringing global artistic perspectives back into local communities.

We welcome the government's continued commitment to culture as an essential part of Australia's national life and strongly support the continuation of long-term cultural policy development.

Andrew Butt (*on behalf of the committee*)

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