

# BlakDance submission

## National Cultural Policy 2026

### Submission

Over the past two decades, BlakDance has evolved from a sector development initiative into a significant national First Nations contemporary performing arts infrastructure organisation. Originally established following the 2005 Creating Pathways National Indigenous Dance Forum to support First Nations contemporary dance artists and touring pathways, the organisation now works nationally and internationally across producing, touring, workforce development, cultural governance, policy leadership and Indigenous cultural exchange.

This evolution reflects structural gaps across the sector that increasingly required First Nations organisations to carry functions and responsibilities not otherwise resourced within the ecology.

Today, BlakDance contributes across:

- producing and touring
- workforce and producer development
- cultural governance and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) implementation
- policy and sector advocacy
- national and international market development
- Indigenous cultural exchange and diplomacy
- audience and community engagement
- presenter relationship development.

BlakDance is lead coordinating organisations within both the First Nations Performing Arts Companies Network (FNPAC) and the Blak Futures Collective, supporting national sector engagement, advocacy and policy development across the First Nations performing arts ecology.

First Nations performing arts organisations are not solely arts producers. They are systems of cultural transmission, employment, governance, community infrastructure and international cultural relationship building.

**BLAKDANCE**

Through performance, touring, workforce development and community engagement, BlakDance contribute to:

- cultural identity
- truth-telling
- intergenerational knowledge transmission
- regional cultural life
- audience development
- international cultural relationships
- creative industries employment and economic activity

at a time of increasing social fragmentation and disconnection nationally.

In the first half of 2026 alone, BlakDance is coordinating four major touring projects nationally and internationally. The organisation has capacity to significantly increase touring, workforce participation and audience engagement outcomes if appropriately resourced through expanded producing, touring and operational infrastructure.

Current funding systems remain misaligned with the operational realities of First Nations cultural infrastructure organisations. Expectations around producing, workforce development, cultural governance, touring, policy leadership and international engagement continue to grow, while staffing and operational investment structures often remain closer to those of a small project based arts organisation.

As outlined through the First Nations Performing Arts Workforce Development Framework 2025–2030, workforce shortages across the sector are structural. First Nations organisations are simultaneously expected to create work while also training future workforces, supporting artists, educating presenters, implementing ICIP protocols and undertaking sector leadership.

The next phase of Revive must therefore move beyond symbolic recognition toward long-term structural investment.

This includes:

- sustained investment in First Nations producing and touring infrastructure
- workforce and organisational pathway development
- long-term audience development and community engagement infrastructure
- systems of cultural safety and presenter capability development across metropolitan, regional and remote Australia
- investment in Indigenous led international exchange and cultural diplomacy
- support for First Nations workforce apprenticeship and traineeship models connected to live productions and touring systems
- investment in dedicated First Nations choreographic and ICIP infrastructure capable of supporting the development of contemporary performance works of scale
- support for self determined commissioning and producing models developed in partnership with artists, communities, presenters and sector organisations.