

## National Cultural Policy Submission

May 2026

### About Black Swan

Black Swan is the heart of our theatre industry in Western Australia. We are a highly respected national major performing arts company. From our actors and creatives, to our technicians, designers and costumiers, and committed and passionate arts managers, Black Swan is a core creative institution in Western Australia.

Black Swan is a driver of creativity, skill and talent for the country, and creates far greater wealth and job opportunities beyond the doors of the theatres where we work, our workshop and our office. In 2025, we generated a gross economic impact of over \$32M to the economy, from Federal funding support of just over \$1M.

Since 1991, Black Swan has presented more than 200 productions, 55 national tours and collaborations, 45 world premieres, 6 international tours / collaborations and has travelled the length and breadth of Western Australia.

Our proud history includes stage adaptation of seminal works including *Bran Nue Dae*, *Cloudstreet*, *You Know We Belong Together*, and *The Shepherd's Hut*, to name a few.

From its inception the company was celebrated for its original works, Western Australian stories, site-specific and promenade productions presented outside the theatre, Perth Festival presentations, extensive touring, and cross-cultural collaborations that uplifted and celebrated Aboriginal artists.

We aim to remain true to this indomitable and inspired spirit to nurture works that reflect imaginatively on Black Swan's place and time in bold and uncompromising ways, in ways that will make people take notice, and in ways that will endure.

Black Swan is a resident company of the State Theatre Centre, where the majority of our activity occurs. Our productions create vibrancy, connection and economic impact for our city and our state.

### Context

Black Swan welcomed the opportunity to contribute to *Revive* and welcomes the opportunity to contribute to a new national cultural policy. A number of the points below are repeated from our submission to *Revive* as they are yet to be addressed and are now more urgent.

As an overriding principle - the fragile ecosystem that is the creative industries in Australia must be taken into account when policy decisions are made – single artists, the small to medium sector, the commercial and not for profit sectors all need to rise for the sector to thrive. Artists must be part of the design of the solutions to the issues we face.

### NPAP submission

Our submission below is to be read in conjunction with and in addition to the submission made by the National Performing Arts Partnership (NPAP) organisations, of which we are one, and endorse.

### **Pillar One - First Nations**

We fully endorse the principle of 'First Nations first'. Our very DNA as a company was created from consistent artist-led First Nations productions, which became some of our most well-known and successful work.

We encourage the Government to make policy based around self-determination and actively consider the submissions by First Nations peoples to sustainably support develop and recognise First Nations culture and artists .

All Australians can learn from the stories that are our shared culture, history and future.

We encourage the Government to instil cross-government policies across the portfolios and tiers of Government and allow the greater encouragement of First Nations culture and artists, and the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expression.

### **Pillar Two – A Place for Every Story**

Australia is an incredibly rich vibrant society, and Black Swan embraces the diversity of our community here in Western Australia.

Clear policy settings need to carefully support the breadth of diversity - culture, ability, gender, geography, age, class, artform, practice mode, platform, career stage, opportunity, organisational culture, governance, advantage and disadvantage – and beyond.

The introduction of a 40% Live Performance Production Incentive for both not for profit and commercial producers would have long lasting impact in this area, and in furthering the aims of Pillar Four – Strong cultural institutions.

### **Pillar Three – Centrality of the Artist**

Policy implementation across Government, and all levels of Government, must include new funding and new support to a sector that has been left behind in so many areas.

Government is urged to support sustainable careers for artists and arts workers.

Workforce development issues are critical within the sector and industry-led initiatives are needed to address the issues identified.

Similar to the system set up for the building and construction industry – portable long service leave would greatly assist the retention of artists and arts workers in our sector.

The importance of the creative industries as part of the essential elements of the workforce and audiences of tomorrow cannot be underestimated: Cross portfolio coordination between education and arts is critical.

### **Pillar Four – Strong Cultural Infrastructure**

Our cultural and arts institutions have been hammered by policy neglect, funding challenges, along with the lingering effects of the pandemic.

New and increased funding and indirect support must be a priority to the sector.

The Federal Government must set the right policy framework, with not just increased funding to the institutions, but a wide range of support that would include

- At least match CPI for the performing arts organisations, due to the ever increasing costs of production.
- provide greater incentives to improving reserves. Matched funding is a key to unlocking greater philanthropic support.
- And to repeat above – a 40% Live Performance Production Incentive, similar to the UK, to incentivise companies to create works of scale and importance and lessen the risk of live performance.

#### **Pillar 5 – Engaging the Audience**

Black Swan fully supports the importance of our work reaching the greatest possible audience, and urges the Government to focus on policies and programs that will increase audiences to create stronger outcomes.

This will entail policies that focus on direct attendances (including consideration of venues and physical access) as well as digital reach.

Improved frameworks for support for international, interstate and regional touring is an additional issue, with the right level of support to make this a viable opportunity, and clear benefits for undertaking the additional risks involved.

Additionally, Black Swan readily identifies the cultural diplomacy value the arts can have, and in particular the immediacy and directness that performances of great live theatre can create.

**Please attribute this submission to Black Swan State Theatre Company.**

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**Kate Champion, Artistic Director**

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