

National Cultural Policy Submission

1472189

Public

Organisation

Flinders Quartet Inc.



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Flinders Quartet is a leading Australian string quartet, on Wurundjeri Country in Melbourne, presenting bold concert seasons, commissioning new Australian works, and developing the next generation of chamber musicians and composers.

This submission offers two propositions:

EMBED EDUCATION AS A CROSS-PILLAR COMMITMENT

Revive already references education in several places, but these references are dispersed rather than strategic. We propose that education, participation and pathways be embedded as an explicit cross-pillar principle, recognising that the policy's five pillars depend on it for their practical realisation.

This matters because cultural participation depends on literacy built over time; sustainable creative careers require ecosystems of training and mentorship, not isolated programs; and genuine First Peoples engagement requires sustained, reciprocal relationships. FQ's work with First Peoples Advisor James Henry (Yorta Yorta) spans artistic programming, organisational strategy, and governance. He will be commissioned to create new work through our Listen to the Land project alongside composers Chris Sainsbury and Nardi Simpson. This takes years to build and must be resourced accordingly.

FQ's Pathways ecology spans five interconnected levels, from secondary school partnerships through to the emerging professional sector. Composer development runs across all levels: FQ's programs have commissioned over 50 new Australian works, and those works become the repertoire through which FQ mentors the Pathways ecology ensembles. Emerging and mid-career composers gain experience of professional performance practice; young musicians encounter new Australian music as living repertoire; First Peoples composers are in direct dialogue with the ensemble and its Pathways participants. This is not a pipeline but an ecology: porous, relational, and mutually reinforcing.

We recommend that the next phase of Revive embed education and pathways as a strategic enabler across all five pillars, with measurable outcomes, incentives for sustained partnerships, and support for the anchor organisations in this space.

WIDEN ACCESS TO MULTI-YEAR FEDERAL FUNDING

FQ is funded primarily through Creative Victoria and philanthropy. We receive extremely limited federal support and have not progressed past the EOI stage for Creative Australia's four-year funding program. We welcome the process change for the next round: a pre-application stage gives assessors a better opportunity to engage with what each applicant actually offers, rather than relying on assumptions about what a string quartet does.

We are not suggesting that any organisation's funding be reduced. We are asking a policy question: does the federal funding architecture allow for genuinely distinct organisations working in the same artform to both receive sustained investment? The work FQ does, in new commissions, Pathways, First Peoples relationships, and non-traditional presentation contexts, is substantively different from any other single organisation's offering.

We recommend that Creative Australia's multi-year investment program be reviewed to assess whether it supports the full breadth of organisations doing genuinely distinct work at a national level.

Revive articulates a coherent vision in which artistic excellence, sector sustainability, and equitable access belong together. Our submission asks that this coherence extend to the policy's mechanisms, not only its principles.

