

INTRODUCTION

The 39 National Performing Arts Partnership Framework (NPAPF) organisations welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the new National Cultural Policy.

In 2024, the combined NPAPF organisations reached over 5.4 million audience members and delivered more than 20,500 performances and events. We employed more than 11,000 people with a total collective turnover of \$659m. We represent organisations that are resident in all States, plus the Northern Territory, and include companies that tour across all parts of the country, including to regional and remote locations, as well as internationally. We commission new work by Australian creatives, deliver extensive education and training programs for young people who represent the next generation of Australian artists, audiences and arts workers, and provide a leadership role within the wider performing arts sector.

More broadly, performing arts organisations and businesses are an integral part of Australia's \$67.4 billion cultural and creative industries which collectively contribute around 2.5% of GDP (comparable in size to either the agriculture and forestry or accommodation and food services industries). More Australians see a live performance than all of our major sporting codes combined, whether it's ballet and dance, children's and family entertainment, circus and physical theatre, classical music, comedy, musical and dramatic theatre, opera, arts and music festivals or concerts.

Research, including most recently from A New Approach (ANA), demonstrates that cultural and creative activities help build community cohesion, belonging and trust while enhancing empathy and inclusion. These activities also help combat loneliness and isolation, support individuals and communities in recovering from disasters and trauma, and make cities, suburbs and regions more liveable. Live performance provides space to connect with others, sharing stories and developing an understanding about different lived experiences.

The power of engagement with creativity and live performance at a young age is also well understood. Significant individual learning and behavioural benefits, as well as broader societal benefits, have been proven through long-standing national and international research. Access to arts education and performance sets students up for a lifetime enriched by cultural experiences, and to be future audiences across the cultural sector.

However, the performing arts sector continues to be negatively impacted by a combination of forces beyond its control – including significantly higher costs, particularly in travel and production; critical skill shortages; changes to audience and consumer behaviour including reduced frequency and/or predictability of attendance; the impacts of high costs of living; climate change; and the sustainability of careers in the sector.

In this context, arts companies are increasingly needing to be more risk averse, often focusing on smaller-scale productions; reducing their range of offerings; and employing fewer artists and arts workers. Technical skill shortages risk best-practice show delivery and safety, and high-quality audience experience. Fewer new works can be commissioned, and there is less ability to invest in vital sector development and training.

These impacts are amplified by, in real terms, flat or decreasing Government investment at all levels – Federal, State and Local. Recent research indicates that although Australia's population increased by 27% between 2007–08 and 2023–24, cultural expenditure over that time only increased by 19%. This represents a significant decrease in the investment in this vital societal lever. And, despite Australia being a culturally active country, it is currently ranked 23 out of 34 OECD countries for expenditure on culture, recreation and religion, with the average expenditure 1.23% of total GDP while the Australian figure is only 0.95%.

These combined factors are having an immediate negative impact on the sector as well as weakening the foundations of Australia's cultural life for generations to come.

The NPAPF organisations are committed to supporting the Government to build on its landmark *National Cultural Policy – Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place (Revive)*.

However, to realise its ambitions, additional targeted initiatives are required. The recommendations outlined in this submission address this need. These will also support the delivery of other cross-Governmental policies, including in portfolios such as Foreign Affairs and Trade, Employment and Workplace Relations, Education, Health, Disability, Ageing and Regional Development, as well as supporting other key areas such as *Closing the Gap* and *Cost of Living*.

RECOMMENDATIONS | SUMMARY

The new National Cultural policy should:

Pillar One: First Nations First

1. Sustainably support, develop and recognise the entire First Nations performing arts workforce system.
2. Provide investment and support for a dedicated First Nations performing arts commissioning system.
3. Ensure appropriate resourcing and recognition of requirements to fully support cultural governance and ICIP Infrastructure.
4. Support national touring and international exchange systems which reflect First Nations cultural practice and systems.
5. Ensure culturally informed pathways to long term sustainability for First Nations artists, arts workers and organisations.
6. Embed First Nations led cross-government alignment.

As identified in the Blak Futures Collective and First Nations Performing Arts Companies Network submission, First Nations cultural governance, workforce development international exchange and cultural continuity must operate as integrated principles across all pillars of the next National Cultural policy, rather than as isolated initiatives.

Pillar Two: A Place for Every Story

7. Endorse and commit to the introduction of a 40% Live Performance Production Incentive (LPPi) for commercial and not-for-profit producers.

Pillar Three: Centrality of the Artist (and Arts worker)

8. Support sustainable careers for artists and arts workers, including in not-for-profit organisations.
9. Support nation-wide industry-led training initiatives to address identified critical workforce and skills shortages across the arts and cultural sector.

Pillar Four: Strong Cultural Infrastructure

10. Enhance the overall level of investment in the sector, structured for long term sustainability
11. Empower a coordinated national approach to policy development and funding across federal, state and local jurisdictions, and across portfolios.
12. Recognise and coordinate the structural interdependency between performing arts companies, performing arts presenting venues and all levels of government.
13. Support affordable and efficient access to rehearsal venues and touring accommodation.
14. Reform the operation of the GST-free concession under section 38-250 to better reflect contemporary operating models.
15. Commit to a more ambitious arts philanthropy framework, incentivising increased private support for arts and culture.
16. Support arts and cultural organisations to more efficiently harness philanthropic opportunities.

Pillar Five: Engaging the audience

17. Endorse and commit to providing a federal Government-funded Cultural Pass for 13-25 year olds.
18. Develop a cross Government dedicated Arts Access Program for schools.
19. Expand investment that supports live performance touring across Australia.
20. Significantly increase support for Australian live performance companies to tour internationally.
21. Embed and support climate policy across all five pillars of the National Cultural policy.

These recommendations will strengthen the live performing arts sector so it can take its place as one of the most vibrant and important contributors to Australian life - ensuring the benefits of social connectiveness through the arts are available to more members of the Australian community, and that future generations will continue to have access to the positive impact of creativity. We would also point to the submission from Live Performance Australia (LPA) that elaborates on many of these specific initiatives, alongside individual NPAPF organisational and broader sectoral submissions.

RECOMMENDATIONS | DETAIL

Pillar One: First Nations First

First Nations performing arts are essential cultural and social infrastructure, contributing to wellbeing, cultural identity, employment, knowledge transmission and community connection across Australia. Evidence consistently demonstrates that connection to culture contributes to improved social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and is recognised as a national priority under *Closing the Gap*.

There is, however, a growing misalignment between how First Nations performing arts operate in practice and how policy systems support the sector. Current policy settings continue to frame culture primarily as an industry. While economic contribution is important, this framing is insufficient. First Nations performing arts operate as civic, social and cultural infrastructure.

The National Performing Arts Partnership Framework organisations are committed to walking alongside First Nations colleagues, creatives, artists, and arts workers, recognising the shared priority and responsibility to increase the presence and impact of First Nations people in the performing arts, including in decision-making roles, commissioning and representation at all levels.

We support the specific opportunities outlined in the statements and submissions of the **Blak Futures Collective and First Nations Performing Arts Companies Network** – acknowledging their cultural authority and expertise in articulating the First Nations performing arts priorities in Australia.

To fully realise *Revive* and *Closing the Gap* commitments, **the new National Cultural policy should**

- 1. Sustainably support, develop and recognise the entire First Nations performing arts workforce system**, including workforce development across producing, technical, touring and leadership roles; and the recognition of cultural labour within workforce frameworks and long-term workforce sustainability pathways.

Current workforce frameworks do not adequately recognise cultural labour, and commissioning and touring are not supported as employment systems. This is not a workforce shortage. It is a failure to recognise and structure the workforce and systems already sustaining the sector.

We call for funding for a national First Nations performing arts workforce feasibility study and data framework, support for First Nations-led training infrastructure and investment in emerging technical and production workforce pathways.

- 2. Provide investment and support for a dedicated First Nations performing arts commissioning system**, including enabling dedicated commissioning pathways for works of audience scale and cultural scale; investment in long term creation and development processes; and providing support for independent artists and emerging companies, as well as support for writers, dramaturgs, choreographers and producers.

Despite the scale and maturity of First nations performing arts practice nationally and internationally, there remains no properly resourced federally funded small-to-medium First Nations performing arts sector.

- 3. Ensure appropriate resourcing and recognition of requirements to fully support cultural governance and ICIP Infrastructure.**

First Nations performing arts organisations carry significant responsibility in maintaining and transmitting cultural knowledge connected to Country, community and environmental stewardship. Culture must be recognised as part of Australia's resilience infrastructure.

However, Cultural governance and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) are not consistently embedded across funding systems. To fully support cultural governance, we call for full resourcing of cultural governance and protocol processes, embedded ICIP frameworks across all funding systems and recognition of governance and cultural labour as core infrastructure.

- 4. Support national touring and international exchange systems which reflect First Nations cultural practice and systems.**

First Nations national and international touring and exchange operates differently to standard arts models. First Nations performing arts are increasingly operating within global cultural networks through touring, Indigenous-to-Indigenous exchange, commissioning, co creation and cultural diplomacy. This includes reciprocal exchange, international relationship development and Indigenous diplomacy.

However, despite First Nations arts and international engagement both being identified as national priorities, there has been no sustained First Nations-led market development infrastructure embedded within Creative Australia's international systems.

To support touring and exchange we call for equitable and culturally grounded touring systems, investment in touring feasibility and audience development, producer and cultural brokerage capacity. This requires dedicated First Nations-led market development infrastructure and can be actioned via implementation support for the Tri-Nations Indigenous-to-Indigenous transnational exchange, an export and commissioning strategy as well as support for Indigenous diplomacy and reciprocal exchange. This strategy already exists – what is now required is implementation and long-term resourcing.

5. Ensure culturally informed pathways to long term Sustainability for First Nations artists, arts workers and organisations.

Current policy settings continue to frame culture primarily as an industry. While economic contribution is important, this framing is insufficient. First Nations performing arts operate as civic, social and cultural infrastructure. To support long term sustainability for First Nations performing arts companies we call for pathways from project funding to multi year operational support, support for organisational stability and institutional growth, leadership sustainability and succession planning and infrastructure investment focused on people and practice, not solely buildings.

6. Embed First Nations led cross -Government alignment.

First Nations performing arts sustain wellbeing, language, identity, intergenerational knowledge transmission, community cohesion and cultural continuity. To properly support organisations we require stronger coordination between arts, education, foreign affairs, tourism and employment systems.

Greater coherence can be achieved by embedding First Nations leadership across international cultural policy and export structures and aligning cultural policy implementation with Closing the Gap and UNDRIP commitments.

As identified in the Blak Futures Collective and First Nations Performing Arts Companies Network submission, First Nations cultural governance, workforce development international exchange and cultural continuity must operate integrated principles across all pillars of the next National Cultural policy, rather than as isolated initiatives. This includes across all recommendations highlighted below.

Pillar Two: A Place for Every Story

The new National Cultural policy should:

7. Endorse and commit to the introduction of a 40% Live Performance Production Incentive (LPPI) for commercial and not-for-profit producers to attract investment in a globally competitive market, supporting the development of new works in Australia across theatre, dance, ballet, opera, music and other live performance, and including First Nations works.

This critical investment in Australian live performance across the commercial and not-for-profit sectors offers a 40 per cent offset on qualifying production costs. It would be applied as a **tax offset** for taxpaying entities, or as a **rebate** for non-taxpayers, including not-for-profit organisations. Rebates or offsets would only be realised on eligible production-related spend, ensuring the benefits flow directly to the industry and are tied to tangible creative output.

International case studies, including from the UK, and financial modelling conducted by Live Performance Australia, highlight the significant benefit of this proposal for the nation's performing arts sector, its artists and its arts workers. Following the Creative Industries Tax Summit in September 2025, this high impact initiative is understood to be supported by all State Governments.

Enshrining the **Live Performance Production Incentive (LPPI)** in the new National Cultural Policy would be the single most transformative structural intervention available to government. Amplifying the crucial foundational investment from all layers of Government, the LPPI will stimulate private investment, and deliver systemic rather than incremental change to the economics of performing arts production. The NPAPF organisations endorse Live Performance Australia's advocacy position on the LPPI, and add our voices to the sector's coordinated call for its introduction.

Pillar Three: Centrality of the Artist (and Arts worker)

The new National Cultural policy should:

8. Support sustainable careers for artists and arts workers, including in not-for-profit organisations.

Australia's arts workforce is a vital, expansive ecology defined by a high reliance on freelance work, interconnected subsectors, and systemic precarity. While it employs over half a million people, the sector faces critical skills shortages, long-standing wage issues, and an ongoing need for sustainable operations.

The sector operates as an integrated system rather than a single industry. It spans everything from independent sole-operators, small to medium arts organisations, larger not-for-profit organisational employers, such as the NPAPF organisations, festivals, venues, major state institutions and commercial enterprises. Touring programs share performing arts work regionally, interstate and internationally. Individuals – artists, creatives, technical crew, producers, front of house staff, and a broad suite of other arts workers - move between elements of the connected ecosystem.

Only about 9% of artists work full-time solely on their creative practice. Much of the workforce balances multiple jobs, relying on a mix of freelance work, arts-related employment, and non-arts jobs to make ends meet. While creative output is highly valued culturally, economic conditions remain tough. Average incomes for artists fall well below the national workforce average, with professional artists averaging just \$23,200 annually from creative work, and the sector routinely suffers from higher-than-average job mobility and underemployment.

Without arts and arts workers, the goals of *Revive* will not be met, and the benefits to the community will be severely impacted. Conditions to retain a healthy and sustainable creative workforce must be addressed, including addressing sector-wide recruitment and retention. Approaches to address this challenge could include:

- Extending **Public Benevolent Institutions (PBI) status** to a broader range of arts and cultural institutions. This critically enables the attraction and retention of skilled staff, with an ability to compete for talent against other industries and address current skills shortages.
- Piloting dedicated **Artists as Workers Schemes** to embed salaried artists as hybrid artistic/administrative workers inside multiple organisations, including those in the NPAP framework. As one model, this could be a multi-year training and employment initiative that combines artistic practice with arts administration and organisational operations. It tests a new model of hybrid artistic and administrative employment, supporting artists to build sustainable careers while strengthening the creative and operational resilience of participating organisations and the wider sector.
- Explore **portable benefits and entitlements for freelance workers** which can be carried from one job or project to another, regardless of the employer or contract, such as annual or long service leave. This could include access to paid leave or income support for freelancers between contracts or gigs, as implemented in the Republic of Ireland's Basis Income for the Arts (BIA) initiative.

9. Support nation-wide industry-led training initiatives to address identified critical workforce and skills shortages across the arts and cultural sector.

The recent [Creative Workforce Scoping Study](#) conducted by Service and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA). articulates that Australia's creative industries are facing critical workforce and skills shortages, exasperated by precarious work conditions, a disconnect between formal education and industry needs, low wages and overwork. Workforce shortages are most acute in production/technical roles, off-stage creative roles (lighting designers in particular) and marketing and communications.

It highlighted the need for new or re-invigorated initiatives in the performing arts to strengthen support for **industry-led on-the-job mentoring and traineeships** to address identified skills gaps and ongoing workforce resilience. Once off pilot programs could be used as models for longer-term sustained initiatives, such as the recent Creative Australia Producer and Production workforce development programs in which multiple NPAPF organisations participated.

The ANZCO classifications also should be reviewed to sufficiently capture **performing arts producing roles** (such as Executive Producers, Producers and Assistant Producers), bringing this into alignment with screen producers and ensuring that the Occupation Shortage List (OSL) accurately captures all workforce supply gaps.

The SaCSA study also identified slow progress on delivering diversity and inclusion due to structural barriers, and a consistent need across performing arts for business skills for creatives, alongside management and leadership skills. Structurally, this could be enhanced by initiatives to actively encourage specialists with expertise in law, finance, human resources, psychology, coaching and/or mediation to make **pro bono support available to arts companies** (rather than frequently relying on these skills to be covered by volunteer board directors, particularly in smaller organisations).

These findings confirm and validate the NPAPF organisations' experience and provides evidence that the new policy must act on.

Pillar Four: Strong Cultural Infrastructure

The new National Cultural policy should:

- 10. Enhance the overall level of investment in the sector, structured for long term sustainability.** This would allow for rebuilding of capability within the sector, organisational stability and vitality, and the crucial scaffold to support the ongoing development of artists and artform.

With federal per capita expenditure for arts and culture being the lowest on record at \$114 in 2023, there is a clear urgent need for increased investment to achieve the ambitions of the National Cultural Policy.

This increase should include a **step change** in the level of overall investment that:

- reflects the current increased cost base impacting all arts organisations and individual artists;
- acknowledges the recent broadening of criteria applied to many funding schemes to a wider range of entities and increases funding pools to avoid unintended impacts on existing organisations.
- enables individuals and organisations, including multi-year funded organisations, to seek specific strategic project funding which specifically supports the new Cultural Policy.

In addition, to be sustainable, **structurally**

- Government funding must keep pace ongoing with rising expenses, rather than being indexed at less than CPI. The sector cannot meet the objectives of *Revive* or a new Cultural Policy with partially indexed funding from government, which is a decline in real terms. This damages the ability to maintain standards, employ artists and arts workers, maintain infrastructure, invest in new work, and keep ticket prices affordable and audiences who are representative of the whole community.
- Funding arrangements must enable long-term strategic and operational planning, with multi-year horizons and adequate timelines for decision making.

More specifically, **the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework has provided vital funding stability and should be continued in the new policy.** However, the Government should consider an increased investment quantum relative to the actual cost of researching, developing and producing performing arts at a world-class standard and reflective of the sector leadership role of the organisations within the Framework.

- We acknowledge that through *Revive*, there was an investment via Creative Australia to support large-scale, ambitious artistic projects that reach broad audiences – the “*works of scale*” funding, now known as the *Creative Futures Fund*. This fund has been a welcome addition to support the development and production of specific types of works within the sector for a broad range of organisations and entities.
- However, the specific remit of this fund - to support the creation and sharing of Australian stories, including adaptations from novels to stage/film, with new ways for people to engage, including cross sector partnerships - has a limited application only. As such, it has not addressed the wider need for **increased investment levels on a broader, ongoing basis, to deliver ambitious and engaging works for the Australian community**, and which showcase the breadth of talents of Australian artists and creatives.

11. Empower a coordinated national approach to policy development and funding across federal, state and local jurisdictions, and across portfolios (e.g. Health, Education, Trade, Investment).

International and Australian research confirms that arts and culture have direct, positive impacts on cohesion, health, sustainability, security and prosperity. Providing access to arts and culture for all Australians, whoever they are and wherever they live, is not simply a matter for the arts portfolio. This is a critical whole-of-government responsibility.

Unlocking this power of the performing arts to support other policy areas will require creating real mechanisms designed to broker **cross-portfolio connections** – with structured opportunities to unleash additional investment. For example, this could include recognising Arts and Culture as an eligible sector under **the National Reconstruction Fund and Industry Growth Program**.

This could include elevating the existing meeting of Cultural Ministers to a **formalised Ministerial Council**, reporting annually to National Cabinet, as suggested by A New Approach. This would provide a functional and transformative step to give higher priority to the nation's cultural needs and ambitions.

12. Recognise and coordinate the structural interdependency between performing arts companies, performing arts presenting venues and all levels of government. Establish a national framework that aligns federal, state and local investment in cultural infrastructure, company sustainability and venue capacity.

Performing arts companies and the presenting venues in which they perform are part of a single cultural ecosystem. National policy should recognise this interdependency and support it through a coordinated approach across multiple layers of government.

The federal government has a primary role in supporting national and major performing arts companies: their artistic output, workforce development, touring activity, audience reach and long-term sustainability. State and local governments have a central role in supporting the venues, precincts and civic infrastructure through which that work reaches the public.

While the funding, ownership and management of companies and presenting venues often sit within different jurisdictions and policy frameworks, the success of the performing arts depends on the strength of the partnership between those who create the work and those who enable it to be experienced by the public. The artistic, civic and economic impact of the sector is most fully realised when companies and venues operate in close alignment.

Large funded performing arts organisations are intrinsically linked to the major venues in which they perform, just as those venues realise their civic purpose through ongoing collaboration with resident companies of scale and ambition. The same principle applies across the broader sector. Companies of different scales rely on venue access, touring circuits, local presentation partnerships and state-based infrastructure. Presenting venues, in turn, rely on strong companies to animate their stages, attract audiences, support hospitality and tourism, and deliver public value.

Recent venue refurbishments, changing usage patterns and growing demand for shared stages have made clear that artistic output and infrastructure capacity are inseparable. Reduced performance windows, delayed refurbishments, constrained technical capacity or misaligned investment priorities can affect programming, employment, touring, revenue and audience access across multiple organisations at once.

This points to the need for a more **coordinated national approach**. Federal investment in companies should be planned with an understanding of state and local investment in the presenting venues those companies depend on. State and local infrastructure priorities should be shaped with an understanding of the resident and touring companies that give those venues purpose and public impact.

A **formal co-investment framework** would help align these priorities, support long-term planning and reduce the risk of fragmented decision-making. It would strengthen the resilience of the whole performing arts ecology by ensuring that investment in companies, presenting venues and cultural infrastructure is coordinated, complementary and directed toward shared national outcomes.

13. Support affordable and efficient access to rehearsal venues and touring accommodation.

The development and rehearsal of work within the live performing arts is inherently linked to the physical co-location of the artists, creatives, technical staff and broader arts workers involved. However, rising property costs and limited access to affordable, safe and productive creative space continue to place significant pressure on the sustainability of Australia's arts sector, impeding the ability for artists and organisations to develop, create and rehearse new work.

This impacts all parts of the sector including those who rent or lease physical ongoing premises, as well as availability and affordability of rehearsal spaces for artists and organisations on a project basis.

Opportunities could include:

- providing tax incentives or a rental subsidy scheme to new and existing property developers and owners to provide sustainable **access to unused space** to artists and arts companies. A national scheme could incentivise property developers and owners to make vacant or underutilised spaces available for rehearsals, studios, creative development, and residency programs. This initiative would increase access to affordable creative infrastructure while also activating unused buildings, supporting urban renewal, and strengthening connections between artists and local communities. It would create practical pathways for developers and the arts sector to partner in ways that deliver both cultural and civic value.
- better **leveraging Government-owned assets**, solving, in part, the need for space far more efficiently than building more physical infrastructure. For example, this could include a program which coordinates between local and state government to identify unused government-owned spaces that could be donated to arts organisations and freelance artists. Additionally, the leasing model between existing arts organisations who are resident in Government-owned assets could be remodelled to shift the focus from commercial return to an investment in artists developing work and creating audience connection. This strategy also develops partnerships between the independent sector, cultural institutions and/or larger organisations.

The benefits of improving access to rehearsal spaces could be amplified by creating a national **Guest Artist Rebate initiative**, such as tax incentives for accommodation providers that offer discounted lodging to visiting artists, touring productions, and creative practitioners. This would address the rising accommodation costs that are placing significant pressure on existing creation and touring models, limiting the scale, reach and diversity of work able to be developed and travel across Australia.

14. Reform the operation of the GST-free concession under section 38-250 to better reflect contemporary operating models, including allowing eligible ticket sales by charity-endorsed and DGR live performance organisations to be treated as GST-free.

Live performing arts pricing often mixes GST-free and GST-inclusive ticket classes, particularly for larger companies and producers. This creates compliance complexity, retrospective tax risk, and reduces revenue available to reinvest in Australian work. Eligible charity-endorsed and DGR organisations should be able to treat **all ticket sales as GST-free** under clear conditions.

The New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999 (s38-250(2)) allows endorsed charities/DGR entities to sell tickets GST-free only where the ticket price is less than 75% of the cost of supply. Tickets above the threshold incur GST. The current cost-test methodology under s38-250(2) has not changed since July 2000, but the economics of these for purpose companies has changed in that time with many companies demonstrating an increasing reliance on ticket income and thus amplifying the impact of GST complexity. This

- Creates uncertainty and administrative burden when setting prices and substantiating the threshold.
- Introduces retrospective tax risk where ticketing systems or cost estimates do not align to GST treatment.
- Discourages small price increases because GST can reduce net revenue unless prices rise materially.

A **100% GST-free setting** would remove a structural barrier to incremental revenue growth, reduce retrospective tax risk, and support reinvestment in Australian performing arts, including tours and community access initiatives. In addition, this would provide greater pricing flexibility to keep tickets affordable and equitable; and enable simpler pricing and compliance through one GST treatment across tickets sold by for purpose arts organisations.

15. Commit to a more ambitious arts philanthropy framework, incentivising increased private support for arts and culture, specifically to

- Increase tax deductible donations to 1.5x amount of gift.
- Expand matched funding programs to increase donations.
- Lead a nationwide campaign that inspires and encourages Australians to donate to the arts.

Revive identified the need to promote philanthropic giving. However, more work is needed to meet the Australian Government's commitment to double giving by 2030. The Productivity Commission noted that, while the total value of donations has increased over recent decades, fewer people are claiming a tax deduction for giving. Australia's giving also compares unfavourably with our global counterparts - Australian giving equates to 0.81% of GDP, in comparison to New Zealand (1.84%) and the United States (2.1%).

Individuals are less likely to give if the financial incentive they receive is too weak. Currently, donors can claim back the exact amount that they gift to a DGR entity. Allowing them to claim a deduction of 1.5x the donation amount would **incentivise donations**. This model has been successfully implemented in Singapore, where individuals receive \$2.5 deductions from their taxable income for every \$1 donated (2.5x the donation amount). This approach has also been used historically in Australia to address specific sector needs under defined circumstances: for example, the 10BA tax concession scheme implemented to rebuild Australia's film and television industry. At the time (1981), the Australian Government introduced the Division 10BA Tax Incentive Scheme, allowing investors to claim a tax deduction on eligible film investments and receive tax-free income on 50% of returns to stimulate domestic film production. The time-limited scheme successfully stimulated the domestic screen industry and launched iconic films like *Crocodile Dundee*. It was then replaced by direct producer-focused incentives.

Matched funding schemes amplify individual contributions to create a more substantial collective impact. It adds legitimacy to the fundraising campaign, and gives donors a compelling reason to give, knowing their contribution will be matched and maximised. Proven benefits of matched schemes include increasing donation amounts; building stronger relationships with major donors; expanding the donor base, particularly smaller donors; making the 'ask' easier; and boosting visibility and attracting media coverage. Existing programs like Plus1, MATCH Lab, and ACF Boost (all administered by Creative Australia) could be used as models on which to expand further.

16. Support arts and cultural organisations, many of which already hold DGR status, to more efficiently harness philanthropic opportunities.

Philanthropic and private sector giving is growing as a required proportion of overall income for performing arts companies, necessitated by stagnant Government funding, cost-of-living increases dampening box office returns and presenter fees, and the need to offset major inflationary cost increases.

However, skilled staff are in high demand across multiple not-for-profit sectors, with the administrative and system burden high to acquire and steward required donors and partners.

Specific initiatives to strengthen the sector's capacity, capability and effectiveness could include:

- Enhancing and extending **Creative Australia initiatives** to grow the arts sector's philanthropic aptitude. This would build on the integration of Creative Partnerships Australia into Creative Australia and ensure the ongoing delivery of initiatives such as mentoring, workshops and training.
- Adopting an international model such as the **UK's Gift Aid program** for arts and cultural organisations with DGR status. Under this model, for every donation made to a registered DGR status arts and cultural organisation, the Australian Government would directly contribute an additional percentage to the organisation. Gift Aid has successfully increased giving in the UK, with half of donors utilising it and cultural charities gaining substantial benefit. In Australia, a similar rebate could assist arts organisations who struggle to attract large volumes of donations, encourage donors at all levels through immediately boosting the impact of every donation and create a compelling message to galvanise more giving. Required administration could leverage Australia's existing tax infrastructure, with donation details submitted to the ATO via an online portal.

Pillar Five: Engaging the audience

The new National Cultural policy should:

17. Endorse and commit to providing a federal Government-funded Cultural Pass for 13-25 year olds.

Attendance at live performances in Australia is heavily constrained by cost-of-living pressures - 59% of young people (16-25) and over half of the general population identifying expense as the primary barrier.

The pass would support significantly **discounted or free access** to arts and cultural live performances and participatory workshop experiences, without impacting financial sustainability for organisations. Successful overseas examples of a Culture Pass have been rolled out in Italy, Germany and France, providing between €100 to €500 to young people to use across cultural events and products; in France, 41% of these funds have been to live performances.

18. Develop a cross Government dedicated Arts Access Program for schools.

The NPAPF organisations significantly contribute to the variety of learning programs available to Australian students and young people, including through curriculum-aligned performances and workshops. However, the combination of pressure on school budgets and performing company budgets now mean that these programs are increasingly being reduced, cut altogether, or are only available to communities who can afford costly fee-for-service models.

An **Arts Access Program**, could, for example, be used to support opportunities such as artist-in-residence programs; workshops with teaching artists; additional subsidies for incursions for remote, small and disadvantaged schools; and access requirements for schools to attend performances (including transport). The Cultural School Bag (Norway) could provide an international benchmark to emulate – with this program giving all students the opportunity to experience, become familiar with, and develop an understanding of high quality professional artistic and cultural expressions.

The impact of this initiative would be amplified by **direct support for organisations** with existing high-quality programs - maintaining and expanding reach in areas of identified disadvantage and providing more access for students to curriculum-aligned performing arts education.

19. Expand investment that supports live performance touring across Australia, reflecting real growth in costs and ensuring funding models continue to be fit-for-purpose for evolving and unique community needs, sustainable touring models, and audience and artistic development requirements.

The current regional and national touring model is under intense pressure, substantially reducing the ability for companies, to connect with audiences across all parts of Australia. These challenges are mirrored for companies who proudly represent Australia and Australian creative talent internationally.

- Producing companies have faced, and continue to experience, significant increases in the costs of touring. These are no longer able to be covered by stagnant Government touring funding envelopes;
- Fees payable by regional, metropolitan, and international presenting venues have been reduced due to their own increased costs of operating and revenue pressures, adding to the gap between touring and broader operating costs for producing companies and available funding.

Specific initiatives include:

- Doubling investment in **Playing Australia** for touring focused in regional and remote Australia, including funding timelines that support effective planning and resourcing;
- Amplifying this investment with complementary touring funds for companies and artists to showcase their work **nationally in larger metropolitan centres**;
- Developing targeted support for **new ways of engagement** between producing companies, presenting venues, and local communities. These could include: green-touring initiatives; skills sharing initiatives; new audience development strategies; new programming models which combine workshops, engagement with local artists, and performances over longer periods; expanding funding program remits to support touring of performances into regional schools; a “go see” fund to enable presenters to see new work created regionally and nationally; collaborative engagements which support the development of new work outside of metropolitan centres; and/or use of non-traditional venues and spaces.

20. Significantly increase support for Australian live performance companies to tour internationally.

This investment in the export of Australian performance and artist exchange into international markets has both cultural and economic relevance. It expands the power of valuable soft diplomacy across multiple jurisdictions, as well as meeting demonstrable market demand, particularly in Europe and the Americas. International posts' feedback highlights the cultural diplomacy value of the performing arts.

However, because of increasing travel costs from Australia, and our cost-competitiveness compared to other international peers, many NPAPF organisations are currently unable to accept invitations to some of the world's most prestigious festivals and venues.

Whilst there has been a welcome shift in Creative Australia programs which support international touring for live performance, **greater investment** is required to keep up with escalating international travel costs and evolving global touring opportunities and challenges.

Foundational DFAT programs such as the Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grants Program (ACDGP) are significantly over-subscribed and individual grants are still limited to pre-pandemic levels. This severely impacts performing arts international touring viability, particularly for works with a larger cast or requiring freight, such as those often delivered by many of the NPAPF framework organisations.

Where available, funding parameters and timelines are often asynchronous with confirmation of presentation arrangements, leading to lost opportunities or significant risk being borne by touring artists and organisations. Unpredictable geopolitical, climate and other disruptions can also add significant costs at short notice, beyond secured investment envelopes. New initiatives could address these structural barriers, including

- A **presenter-fee matched funding model** to help convert confirmed demand into viable touring.
- A **quick-response international disruption and resilience fund** alongside realistic contingency requirements in publicly supported touring budgets.

This would bring enhanced economic benefits and job creation, together with the opportunity for greater Australian cultural exchange, the showcasing of Australian talent on the world-stage and the initiation of new international collaborations.

In addition to increased direct touring investment, the establishment of a **single fit-for-purpose organisation** would support cross-government International Cultural Relations. A New Approach identified that that of the top 15 economies in the world, Australia is the only nation to not have a single institution to lead its international cultural relations. This compares to organisations such as the Japan Foundation, the Korea Foundation, Germany's Goethe Institut or the Alliance Française. Strengthened pathways to DFAT and the international diplomacy network would ensure cultural diplomacy is able to continue to play a key part in the National Foreign Policy agenda as relevant to the world today.

21. Embed and support climate policy across all five pillars of the National Cultural Policy.

The NPAPF organisations recognise climate change as one of the defining challenges facing our community. Within the performing arts sector, the climate crisis is increasingly affecting audiences, artists, infrastructure and the capacity to create and share work. Climate mitigation and adaptation must become central to arts policy, infrastructure planning, touring models, and sector development.

Australia's arts sector has both a responsibility and a leadership opportunity to respond to climate change, particularly given the country's ecological vulnerability and the knowledge systems offered by First Nations communities. Traditional touring models are highly carbon intensive and increasingly challenging due to climate-related disruptions such as floods and fires, particularly in regional Australia.

Climate action is necessary not only for environmental responsibility, but also to ensure Australia remains aligned with the global arts community. The new Cultural Policy should engage in dedicated investment in "**green**" or **low-carbon touring models**. There should be a formal recognition of live performance as essential to **community resilience and recovery in disaster-affected areas**. In addition, there should be **climate-related cancellation funding, sustainable arts infrastructure upgrades, and support for artists and organisations adopting climate-conscious practices**, as formalised within the Theatre Green Book Australia.

**National Performing Arts Partnership Framework Organisations |
National Cultural Policy: Submission**

The National Performing Arts Partnership (NPAPF) organisations believe these recommendations will assist the Government to achieve the desired outcomes of a new Cultural Policy, including the centering of First Nations stories; support of artists and arts workers as valued contributors; strong cultural infrastructure; engaging the audience; growing the creative economy, and crucially, improving access to the performing arts for all Australians, deepening the benefits and impacts of this vital societal lever for generations to come.

About the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework (NPAPF) Organisations

The [National Performing Arts Partnership Framework](#) was launched by the Australian and all state and territory governments in October 2019. It provides investment in Australian performing arts for the benefit of audiences, delivering a cohesive and collaborative national approach to sustainable arts funding into the future and guides effective decision making for the arts and cultural sector. The Framework is administered by Creative Australia, in partnership with all states and the Northern Territory.

As of 2025, there are **39 performing arts organisations** who are part of the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework. They are collectively resident in all states and the Northern Territory, and include organisations who also tour regularly outside their resident state. Selection into the [Framework](#) is based on:

1. Artistic merit, quality and vision.
2. Organisational capacity to deliver on its strategic plan and proposed activities in a way that provides value for money in the expenditure of public funds.
3. Alignment of a company's strategic plan and proposed activities with governments' priorities, taking into account the companies' expertise, reach, artistic aspirations and needs of their communities.

National Performing Arts Partnership Framework Organisations | 2025-2028

Theatre, Circus, Dance and Multi-Arts	Music, Orchestra, Opera and Ballet
Multi-State Agreements	
Performing Lines (<i>Touring New in 2025</i>)	Opera Australia (<i>Touring</i>)
	The Australian Ballet (<i>Touring</i>)
New South Wales	
Belvoir	Australian Brandenburg Orchestra (<i>Touring</i>)
Griffin Theatre Company	Australian Chamber Orchestra (<i>Touring</i>)
Sydney Theatre Company (<i>Touring</i>)	Musica Viva Australia (<i>Touring</i>)
The Bell Shakespeare Company (<i>Touring</i>)	Sydney Symphony Orchestra
Bangarra Dance Theatre (<i>Touring</i>)	
Sydney Dance Company (<i>Touring</i>)	
Queensland	
La Boite Theatre (<i>New in 2025</i>)	Opera Queensland
Queensland Theatre	Queensland Symphony Orchestra
Circa (<i>Touring</i>)	Queensland Ballet
Dancenorth (<i>Touring</i>)	
South Australia	
State Theatre Company of South Australia	Adelaide Symphony Orchestra
Windmill Production Company (<i>Touring</i>)	State Opera of South Australia
Tasmania	
Terrapin Puppet Theatre (<i>Touring</i>)	Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra
Victoria	
Back to Back Theatre (<i>Touring</i>)	Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Ilbijjerri Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre	Orchestra Victoria
Malthouse Theatre	Victorian Opera
Melbourne Theatre Company	
Western Australia	
Black Swan State Theatre Company	West Australian Opera
Marrugeku (<i>Touring</i>)	West Australian Symphony Orchestra
	West Australian Ballet
Northern Territory	
Artback NT	

(*Touring*) denotes organisations who annually tour nationally and/or internationally outside their Resident State.