

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

Kadimah Yiddish Theatre, a subset of Kadimah Cultural Centre and National Library

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I write this submission in my role as Chair of Melbourne-based Kadimah Yiddish Theatre (KYT) and Director of Kadimah Jewish Cultural Centre and National Library. KYT is a 100 -yr old theatre company that received its first and only major government grant in 2021 of \$220,000 through the Covid-19 RISE Fund.

This grant, made to an otherwise ineligible organisation enabled KYT, for the first time, to develop its new bi-lingual adaptation YENTL (Yiddish & English) at a professional level, engaging a professional creative team and cast. YENTL's success highlights how KYT has been able to leverage the RISE grant.

YENTL is a compelling case study for more flexible underwriting of independent theatre.

KYT has implemented 4 presentation models:

- Arts Centre Melbourne in March 2022 (2-week season). The premiere season was self-presented through the RISE grant;
- Malthouse Theatre March 2024 (2-week season) Presented by Malthouse – fee to Kadimah + creative royalties with Malthouse covering venue and marketing costs and retaining Box Office;
- Sydney Opera House October 2024 (4-week season) Co-presented with commercial producers. KYT contributing an investment share generated through donation and receiving producer royalty
- Marylebone Theatre London March 2026 (6-week season) Shared risk 60/40 with London producer. KYT risk underwritten through donation and social investment and UK Theatre Tax Rebate Policy (TTR)

IMPACT TO DATE

Each season leveraged off the success of the previous season, with future seasons, including a New York run in discussion.

- 24,839 diverse audiences in Melbourne, Sydney and London have so far seen YENTL
- \$1.371m in Net Box Office has been generated
- \$320k in donation and months of high level volunteering have been secured enabling the Malthouse, Sydney Opera House and Marylebone London seasons
- 15 theatre award nominations, winning 5
- 32 x 5 and 4-star reviews across the 4 seasons
- 2 international tours, to North America, including New York and to South Africa under discussion
- The London season attracted 4 major international donors 2 from London and 2 from the US.
- Australian High Commission in London hosted a pre-performance function on Opening Night, followed by an invitation for the Cast and Director to visit Australia House
- 2 new bi-lingual plays in development, Development Workshops are fully donor dependent
- YENTL has proved an effective ambassador at a time of escalating antisemitism. Four seasons, first pre-7 Oct 2023 and subsequent seasons post. Same play, very different geo-political environment. YENTL has proved

the value of the arts in contributing to a civil society. YENTL has been put forward as a case study to the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion.