

May 2026

INTRODUCTION

██████ has been harnessing the transformative power of music to build stronger communities and create brighter futures since 1999. Beginning as a 10-day biennial activation, we have evolved to become a stalwart of Queensland's arts and cultural scene, delivering social, cultural and economic impact through music across the state. Though the ████████ initiative, we unite artists and audiences in unexpected locations, delivering music-led tourism itineraries that attract visitors from across Australia and the world. Through this work, we are uniquely connected to the regional and remote arts ecosystem across Queensland.

We thank the Australian Government for the opportunity to respond to this public consultation, and we acknowledge the role that Revive has played in bolstering Australia's arts & cultural landscape, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Our recommendations below have been shaped by our direct experience in delivering cultural activities across regional and metropolitan areas and we believe they will support the building of a more connected, accessible and resilient cultural landscape.

RECOMMENDATION 1: SUPPORT LONG-TERM REGIONAL IMMERSION, NOT JUST PROJECT DELIVERY

Aligned to Pillar 2 – A Place for Every Story

Establish funding streams that support artists and organisations working in regional & remote areas to undertake long-term engagement and immersion within these communities, rather than limiting investment to short-term project outcomes. Sustained presence in communities before & after project delivery enables deeper local collaboration & representation, strengthens regional cultural capacity, supports local cultural operators and develops stronger regional-metro networks. Providing support for artists, arts workers & organisations to engage deeply truly involves communities in the artistic process. Rather than having art & culture be something regional communities simply observe, true regional immersion allows residents to become an essential component in its creative design & delivery.

██████'s own experience in delivering events across regional & remote Queensland has shown that the most successful events are those that are delivered with and by community across sustained periods of collaboration. Unfortunately, due to funding constraints, this is not always possible as funding is often short-term & heavily outcomes focused. Enabling and supporting sustained regional engagement, be it by an engaged artist or the organisation itself, only serves to deliver greater benefit for communities, artists & audiences alike.

RECOMMENDATION 2: INVEST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONALLY-BASED FIRST NATIONS ARTS WORKERS

Aligned to Pillar 1 – First Nations First

█ is proud to program First Nations artists on its stages (accounting for 44% of all programmed artists in 2025), however when it comes to First Nations arts workers, the pool is limited and largely confined to metropolitan areas. We believe this gap does not reflect a lack of interest or capability, but rather limited access to culturally appropriate training, mentorship, and employment pathways in regional and remote areas, including within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Investment in regionally based First Nations arts workers is critical to building a sustainable sector that is locally informed and community led.

First Nations arts workers play a vital role in ensuring cultural safety for both artists and audiences. Their knowledge of First Nations protocols, cultural authority and community relationships supports respectful storytelling, appropriate engagement, and culturally informed programming from development through to delivery. Their presence reduces the cultural burden on artists and creates environments where First Nations artists feel supported to share work grounded in identity, culture and Country, while guiding audiences toward deeper, more respectful engagement.

Supporting the development of this workforce in regional areas also delivers broader economic and community benefits. It creates meaningful local employment opportunities, strengthens career pathways, and enables First Nations people to remain in and contribute to their communities. At the same time, it builds regional cultural capacity by supporting locally led programming, strengthening partnerships, and developing future leaders. Targeted investment in culturally appropriate training, career pathways and dedicated roles will support a stronger, more culturally grounded and equitable arts ecosystem across Australia.

RECOMMENDATION 3: SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL SOCIAL & CULTURAL IMPACT EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

Aligned to Pillar 2 – A Place for Every Story, Pillar 5 – Engaging the Audience

Create a standardised, nationally coordinated framework for measuring the impact of arts and cultural activity across Australia. The framework should move beyond economic indicators alone to capture the broader public value generated through cultural investment, including social, cultural, community and environmental outcomes.

This should include measures relating to:

- social cohesion and community connection
- wellbeing and mental health outcomes



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- regional resilience and liveability
 - cultural participation and inclusion
 - intergenerational and cross-cultural engagement
 - First Nations cultural strengthening
 - workforce, capacity and skills development
 - environmental sustainability.

The framework should be accessible and practical for organisations to self-administer, reducing the reporting burden currently created by inconsistent approaches across organisations, state boundaries and funding bodies. A nationally consistent model would improve comparability across programs, strengthen evidence-based policy development and support clearer articulation of the long-term public value created through cultural investment.

Importantly, the framework will support recognition of arts and cultural activities as contributors to national objectives including social cohesion, community wellbeing, regional development and economic resilience, rather than positioning cultural activity as something delivered solely for entertainment purposes.

RECOMMENDATION 4: SUPPORT A NATIONALLY COORDINATED SHARED INFRASTRUCTURE MODEL FOR REGIONAL TOURING AND EVENTS

Aligned to Pillar 4 – Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Support a collaborative and nationally coordinated approach to shared infrastructure servicing regional touring, festivals and events, particularly where high-cost or specialised infrastructure can be jointly utilised across regions, local governments and organisations.

Through QMF's experience delivering cultural activity across regional and remote Queensland, infrastructure availability, suitability and ongoing maintenance have consistently emerged as significant barriers to delivery. Where event and production infrastructure is available, it is often ageing or below required standard for high-spec delivery. However, the most common experience is that essential event infrastructure is simply unavailable in regional and remote areas, resulting in QMF and others working in the regions being forced to pay exorbitantly high costs to transport equipment from metropolitan centres at the expense of the event budget and environment. These challenges substantially increase delivery costs, reduce the viability of working in the regions and limit the scale and quality of cultural experiences available to regional audiences.

Shared infrastructure models including coordinated equipment pools, regional infrastructure hubs, shared technical resources and cross-sector partnerships would improve efficiency, reduce duplication of resources and maximise the value of existing public investment in arts and culture. Greater national coordination could also support more strategic planning around infrastructure maintenance, renewal and access, ensuring regional communities are not disproportionately disadvantaged by geography or cost.





Investment in shared infrastructure should recognise that regional cultural delivery often relies on temporary and mobile infrastructure systems rather than permanent venues alone. Supporting these models would strengthen the sustainability, accessibility and resilience of regional cultural activity while enabling more communities to participate in high-quality arts and cultural experiences.

RECOMMENDATION 5: RECOGNISE AUDIENCE ACCESS AND REGIONAL MOBILITY AS CRITICAL CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Aligned to Pillar 4 – Strong Cultural Infrastructure

’s experience delivering cultural activity across regional and remote Queensland has consistently highlighted the impact transport limitations can have on audience attendance, artist mobility and the overall viability of regional events. Often, the lack of reliable public or shared transport and the inconsistency of road quality are significant barriers to participation in cultural life for visitors and locals alike. Regional mobility is a key enabler of cultural participation in the regions.

National cultural infrastructure planning should therefore consider the transport and access barriers that limit participation in regional cultural activity, including:

- expanded EV charging infrastructure in regional areas
- temporary support measures for regional fuel infrastructure during periods of high visitation demand, reducing wait times for refuelling and to ensure locals aren’t negatively impacted or unable to refuel as needed
- reduced barriers to increase temporary transport options during major cultural events, including coach, rail and air services.

Recognising transport connectivity as part of cultural participation infrastructure would improve accessibility, strengthen audience reach, support regional visitation and help ensure regional communities are not excluded from cultural participation due to geography or transport limitations. Importantly, this frames transport not simply as a broader infrastructure issue, but as a key condition that enables equitable access to arts and culture across Australia.

RECOMMENDATION 6: DEVELOP NATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION STANDARDS FOR FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Aligned to Pillar 5 - Engaging the Audience

Establish nationally consistent minimum standards and practical guidelines for accessibility and inclusion across festivals and events, co-designed with people with lived experience of disability and access barriers. This should include physical accessibility, sensory access, communication access, affordability and culturally safe participation.

These standards would embed accessibility as a core element of audience engagement, ensuring that people with disability and others who experience access barriers can



participate fully and confidently. The standards could address multiple dimensions of access, covering physical environments, sensory considerations, communication formats, affordability, and culturally safe participation, while acknowledging the diversity of the sector by allowing for scalable and tiered application.

By providing practical guidance, shared benchmarks, and pathways for continuous improvement, the initiative would support festivals of all sizes to build capability over time, encourage a consistent attendee experience, and would foster greater accountability through alignment with funding frameworks and broader policy settings. Ultimately, nationally aligned standards would contribute to increased participation, stronger audience trust, and a more inclusive and vibrant cultural sector.

RECOMMENDATION 7: INTRODUCE A FESTIVAL & EVENT TICKET GUARANTEE SCHEME TO SUPPORT EVENTS IN THEIR ESTABLISHMENT PHASE

Aligned to Pillar 5 - Engaging the Audience, Pillar 2 – A place for every story

Australia's festival landscape is currently undergoing significant structural pressure. While demand for live experiences remains strong, rising production and artist costs as well as constrained corporate sponsorship have seen organisers taking increased financial risk when delivering events. At the same time, audience behaviour has shifted toward late ticket purchasing, disrupting cash flow for organisers and contributing to potentially avoidable cancellations. Nowhere are these pressures felt more than in the establishment phase of a new festival or event.

With the ever-decreasing pool of festivals across the country, it is critical that we invest in cultural innovation, regional activation and sector renewal. Without intervention, we face a weakening pipeline of successful events which would contribute to a decline in event-driven tourism, regional liveability and cultural participation across the country.

Festivals and major events typically require three to five years to reach stability. During this period, organisers build audiences, establish partnerships, refine programming, and develop reliable forecasts. Early years are often financially fragile, with profitability only achieved after multiple iterations. In the current risk environment, many festivals are failing before they reach maturity, not due to lack of skill or rigorous programming, but due to short-term financial exposure.

A potential reform could be the introduction of a festival and event ticket guarantee scheme which would provide targeted market stabilisation by supporting festivals through their vulnerable early years.

Under the model, Creative Australia could:

- underwrite a portion of projected ticket revenue for eligible events (such as those addressing market failure) in their establishment years
- trigger financial support only if minimum sales thresholds are not met

- provide incentives or other funding support to festivals that meet or exceed reasonable sales forecasts, encouraging responsible planning and promotion.

This mechanism would address the mismatch between upfront costs and late ticket sales, enabling organisers to program with greater confidence. If appropriately designed and administered, the scheme could encourage the development of new festivals & events, support diversity amongst the festival sector and build long-term sustainability of Australia's festival ecosystem.

RECOMMENDATION 8: ESTABLISH A NATIONAL CULTURAL DISCOVERY PLATFORM

Aligned to Pillar 2 – A Place for Every Story, Pillar 3 – Centrality of the Artist

Establishing a national cultural discovery platform for Australia would fundamentally reshape how audiences & the creative sector access, engage with, and value arts and cultural experiences across the country. Functioning similarly to the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), but tailored specifically to arts and culture, this platform could aggregate events, exhibitions, performances, festivals, public art, First Nations cultural experiences, and community-led activities into a single, highly visible digital ecosystem. By drawing content from organisations of all size - major institutions, independent artists, local councils, and grassroots groups - it would create a comprehensive and inclusive national picture of cultural activity. This would not only improve visibility for under-resourced practitioners but also ensure that regional and remote cultural offerings are discoverable alongside metropolitan programming.

Crucially, such a platform would address the structural “discovery disadvantage” that currently exists across the sector. At present, individual operators bear the burden of marketing and digital reach, often competing in crowded and fragmented online environments with limited capacity or resources. A centralised discovery layer would allow smaller organisations & individual artists to benefit from shared traffic, data insights, and national promotion. Intelligent search, personalised recommendations, and geolocation features could help connect audiences with relevant experiences, whether they are tourists planning itineraries or local residents exploring their communities. This would democratise access to audiences in the same way that digital marketplaces have done in other industries.

Data generated through the platform on audience behaviour, geographic demand, and participation patterns would provide valuable insights to inform funding decisions, policy design, and investment priorities. Over time, this evidence base could support more equitable distribution of resources and better alignment between supply and demand across artforms and regions.



RECOMMENDATION 9: UNDERTAKE AND DISSEMINATE AUDIENCE INTELLIGENCE DATA TO SUPPORT SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY

Aligned to Pillar 5 – Engaging the Audience

Developing a frequently updated, shared national audience intelligence data set would provide the arts and cultural sector with a critical evidence base to better understand, reach, and serve Australian audiences. At present, audience data is often fragmented, infrequently collected or siloed within individual organisations, limiting its usefulness for broader strategic decision-making. A coordinated, national approach would consolidate insights across artforms, geographies, and demographics, offering a more dynamic and real-time picture of who is engaging with culture, and just as importantly, who is not. By identifying patterns in participation, preferences, and behaviours, as well as barriers such as cost, location, accessibility and cultural relevance, this data would enable a deeper understanding of audience needs across diverse communities.

This shared intelligence would empower organisations of all sizes to make more informed, evidence-based decisions. Programming could be shaped by clear insights into audience interests and unmet demand, pricing strategies could be adjusted to balance sustainability with accessibility and targeted outreach efforts could be developed to engage underrepresented groups. For smaller organisations in particular, access to high-quality, national data would help address existing capability gaps, reducing reliance on assumptions or limited internal datasets.

At a strategic level, this initiative would support investment and planning by governments and funding bodies. By tracking changes in audience behaviour and participation over time, it would enable the measurement of cultural policy outcomes and the identification of emerging trends or inequities. This evidence could inform place-based initiatives, infrastructure investment, and targeted interventions aimed at reducing barriers to participation.