

Office for the Arts
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601



Submission to the National Cultural Policy Consultation

Australian Brandenburg Orchestra | May 2026

Dear National Cultural Policy Team,

About the Brandenburg

For more than 35 years, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra has been a world leader in historically informed performance (HIP) — the practice of performing music on period instruments using the techniques and aesthetics of the era in which works were composed. We are the only ensemble of this scale and specialisation in Australia, the recipient of five ARIA Awards, and a company whose work is the flagship nationally recognised internationally.

Our reach extends from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane to regional Australia and, through our digital platform *Brandenburg One*, to audiences in more than 100 countries. We are a mature, evidence-driven organisation with a clear sense of what we contribute to Australia's cultural life.

In line with the vision outlined in *Revive*, the Brandenburg's fundamental touchstones of heritage, unique repertoire, salience, education and mentoring, audience reach and diversity, innovation, collaboration and social impact will continue to be guided by national policy and to light our path into the future.

This submission is made on the Brandenburg's own behalf and is focused, specific and grounded in over 35 years of building something that did not previously exist in this country.

The Brandenburg's overarching focus for this next chapter is stability. Stability for the arts sector, stability for our audiences and stability for our people and our early music ecosystem. Stability does not mean entrenchment. It means creating a place of comfort, joy and safe predictability, and we believe a new national cultural policy has an important role to play in lifting the mood of the nation.

Revive laid strong groundwork and has made meaningful progress on five important fronts/pillars. The updated policy has the opportunity to build on that foundation by filling gaps, expanding successes and responding to an environment that has changed considerably since 2023. In this submission we first outline two areas where we believe the Government's continued leadership will be crucial, and which will underpin success across all five pillars. We look forward to continuing our engagement throughout the development of the new policy and are happy to provide further information at any time.

1. Philanthropy

Recent global and national challenges have shifted philanthropic priorities toward sectors such as health, the environment and emergency relief, and the Government's focus on philanthropic giving comes at an important moment for arts and culture in Australia. Across the sector, the impact of COVID-19 reduced ticket sales substantially, and recovery has been lengthy. Cost of living pressures continue to compound the challenge for audiences and donors alike. Innovative solutions are needed to build a sustainable and confident funding environment for arts and culture, and the Government is well placed to provide leadership in that space.

The Brandenburg offer the following for consideration:

- The Government's work in this area would be well served by the substantial data, evidence and analysis already available on the state of philanthropy in Australia. The Productivity Commission's Inquiry Report — Future Foundations for Giving — and the analyses undertaken by Philanthropy Australia, the New Approach, Live Performance Australia and Creative Australia together provide a comprehensive picture that can inform practical policy design.
- Clear and sustained government statements on the role arts and culture play in the national vision are genuinely influential on philanthropic behaviour. The Government's continued investment in arts and culture provides a signal of confidence that individual donors and private sector partners follow.
- The Government's commitment to double philanthropic giving by 2030 is a significant opportunity for arts and culture. We would welcome consideration of how that commitment can be implemented and tracked specifically for the sector, including:
 - an increase to the legislated minimum distributions for private ancillary funds (PAFs)
 - greater transparency in reporting for registered philanthropists
 - guidance that encourages philanthropic giving without undue influence on artistic direction
 - encouraging foundation and PAF governing documents to include specificity around arts and cultural funding priorities
 - suggested guidelines for philanthropists around social impact reporting
 - encouraging funding of activities and operations that sustain organisations over time, rather than project-only funding which can present risks to overall artistic direction
 - tax deductions for tickets to live performance events and cultural experiences, to encourage in-person participation and broaden the base of prospective donors
- We invite the Government to consider the principle that public investment in arts and culture should be structured to leverage private funds at a ratio where the cost to the taxpayer is less than the private capital it attracts. One approach would be to assess and rank national arts and culture goals and allocate a weighted dollar-matching ratio accordingly. Higher-priority goals

would attract a ratio at or above one-to-one, alongside additional tax incentives potentially including deductibility exceeding 100%. Lower-priority goals would attract proportionally lower ratios. This approach has the potential to grow the overall pool of funding available to arts and culture while making efficient use of public investment.

2. Tax Reform

The Brandenburg has been a committed participant in the NSW Government initiative The Art of Tax Reform. That process has gathered ideas from across the cultural ecosystem and produced one of the most comprehensive collections of reform opportunities for the Federal Government to consider in reshaping how it supports arts and culture. We strongly encourage the Federal Government to draw on the findings and recommendations coming from that extensive consultation and summit process.

Key reform opportunities the Brandenburg specifically endorses include:

- A reduction or removal of tax on prizes and grants, which currently operate as a practical disincentive to excellence and impose a compliance burden on recipients and administering organisations alike.
- Offsets for production costs, directly aligned with the case for a Live Performance Production Incentive — a reform for which EY modelling confirms a positive net fiscal return to government.
- Incentives to support the development of new works and IP generation, recognising that the creation of original Australian work is a public good deserving of dedicated support.
- Initiatives to grow philanthropic and commercial investment in the sector, complementing the measures outlined in Section 1.
- A review of the tax compliance environment for artists and arts and culture organisations, with a view to reducing the disproportionate administrative burden currently carried by smaller companies and individual practitioners.

The Confederation of Australian and New Zealand Orchestras: Co-Signatory Submission

The Brandenburg is a co-signatory to the submission made by Symphony Services Australia on behalf of the Confederation of Australian and New Zealand Orchestras (CANZO). That submission makes four interconnected structural recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: Introduce a Live Performance Production Incentive — a 40% offset on pre-production costs for commercial and not-for-profit live performance producers.
- Recommendation 2: Strengthen the underlying financial settings for philanthropy — including increased deductibility multipliers, expanded Public Benevolent Institution access, GST-free treatment for eligible ticket sales, and a Gift Aid-style government contribution model.

- Recommendation 3: Build innovation capability through formal Arts and DISR governance and support for digital and hybrid delivery models.
- Recommendation 4: Connect cultural capability to national systems — including Industry Growth Program and National Reconstruction Fund eligibility, and reform of the R&D Tax Incentive's arts exclusion.

The Brandenburg endorses all four CANZO recommendations in full. We draw particular attention to Recommendations 1 and 2. EY modelling cited in the CANZO submission confirms that a 40% Live Performance Production Incentive would be revenue-positive for government, returning \$117.3 million in tax received against \$93 million forgone, creating 4,151 FTE jobs and \$1,505 million in additional industry output. We are pleased to be part of a sector making a coherent, evidence-based case for structural reform, and we commend the CANZO submission to the Government's consideration alongside this one.

Conclusion

The Brandenburg is committed to this process and to the relationship with government that underpins it. The Federal Government's continued investment in arts and culture is not only valued — it is foundational to what organisations like ours can achieve. Revive demonstrated what strong cultural policy can do. The next policy has the opportunity to go further.

In summary, the Brandenburg asks the next National Cultural Policy to:

- Consider the philanthropy reform agenda outlined in this submission, including PAF distribution requirements, dollar-matching ratios and tax deductions for live performance attendance.
- Draw on the findings of The Art of Tax Reform process, including production cost offsets, removal of tax on prizes and grants, and a review of compliance burdens on artists and arts organisations.
- Recognise specialist artform practitioners and the distinct workforce, training and infrastructure challenges they face (Pillar 1 and Pillar 3).
- Support the establishment of the Centre for Baroque Excellence as a national cultural infrastructure priority (Pillar 4).
- Consider a distinct recognition and support framework for specialist ensembles (Pillar 4).
- Ensure that artform diversity is embedded alongside demographic diversity in the policy's understanding of a place for every story (Pillar 1 and Pillar 2).
- Develop investment pathways for organisations innovating in audience engagement and digital delivery (Pillar 5).

- Endorse and implement the four structural recommendations in the CANZO submission, to which the Brandenburg is a proud co-signatory.

We look forward to continuing this conversation and to the Government's leadership in shaping a cultural policy that is ambitious, inclusive and lasting. We are happy to provide additional information, evidence or context at any time.

Yours sincerely,



Ashley Giles

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On Behalf of

Bruce Applebaum, Managing Director & co-founder

&

Paul Dyer AO, Artistic Director & co-founder