

PERTH INTERNATIONAL Jazz FESTIVAL

AUSTRALIA'S NEW NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY SUBMISSION BY PERTH INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

The Perth International Jazz Festival (PIJF) appreciates the opportunity to be a part of this important conversation on Australia's new National Cultural Policy.

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. A New Pillar – Children Are the Future

Recommendation: Elevate children to a primary pillar

Children are our future and yet the current Policy's discussion of children is limited to in-school activities (page 59) and engagement through digital platforms and television (pages 85-88). The Policy mentions children only 21 times across 113 pages.

We need to go further.

Australia is a sporting nation and that has been by design. Cultural policy settings needs to mirror our national commitment to sport, embedding the arts into community life from childhood.

The benefits of arts, culture and creativity are far-reaching, delivering social and economic benefit to individuals, communities and the country. Participation in the arts strengthens belonging, identity, education, wellbeing, social cohesion, regional liveability and Australia's relationship with the world. Music and improvisation have proven benefits on the growing brain and neuroplasticity into adulthood.

As the current Policy identifies, Australia needs stronger policy settings for cultural demand. Supporting artists and production is essential, but the system will remain fragile without investment in long-term audiences development, lifelong participation and the conditions that make cultural participation normal and accessible for all – need to start with children.

Studies show that engaging children builds deep brand loyalty. This happens with sports, and even in banking, where children are given piggy banks to transition them into lifelong clients. I still bank with the first bank I signed up with in primary school with one of these campaigns.

Proposed actions:

- The Australian Government needs to support active participation for children both in-school and beyond the school yard, including access to live performances and community-based activities. Real art, not just art for kids.

- Children focussed cultural organisations are on the verge of extinction. Those remaining need to be supported.
- Cultural organisations generally (dance, opera, orchestra, theatre companies, galleries and museums) need to be supported to provide programs, performances and excursions specifically for children.
- More relaxed administration and risk management needs for schools to enable and support excursions.
- For regional and suburban schools, there should be support for cultural organisations to visit schools for performance based incursions.
- Recognition that consumption by children of culture via digital platforms (including games and screen productions) needs to be carefully managed. This is discussed further below.

Recommendation: Coordinate sustained investment across government

For children to have the opportunity to engage in arts, culture and creativity, implementation requires adequate funding, and coordination across all jurisdictions and all levels of government. Just as the Australian Government invests heavily in road infrastructure for public safety, cultural investment is essential for public wellbeing.

Countless studies have shown that engaging with arts and culture provides profound physical and mental health benefits and well as proven brain health and development. This is critically important with the current epidemic of youth mental health challenges. Cultural events and community art programs bring people together, creating robust social support networks that prevent isolation which can lead to mental health challenges.

As a case study, the Perth International Jazz Festival program in the Pilbara features "PIJF On Tour" events, specifically during Youth Week. It brings professional musicians to the region to host hands-on lyric and songwriting workshops, culminating in live performances designed around themes like "Strength in our Stories".

<https://youtu.be/U-n2pZyUZYg>

PIJF On Tour increases arts accessibility and empowers local youth. By collaborating with experienced performers, youth gain the tools to articulate their personal stories, build confidence and share their unique perspectives. At the same time, it brings world-class cultural and creative experiences to regional Western Australia, ensuring communities outside the Perth CBD have access to the arts. Overall, the program acts as a hub for creativity and self-expression, while strengthening community bonds.

Proposed action:

- We need arts, culture and creative pursuits to be organised – and funded – in the same manner as sports and roads, to ensure all children have a place where they belong.

Pillars 1 and 2: First Nations First and A Place for Every Story

Recommendation: Recognition of jazz as a unique form of expression

Jazz is one of the most human of all art forms – improvisational, communal and alive in the moment. It serves as a living, breathing testament to cultural fusion and emotional expression, breaking traditional European musical conventions to champion individual creativity, democratic listening and collaboration within a group.

As a case study, the Perth International Jazz Festival connects with the multicultural community by prioritizing cultural diversity in its programming, actively featuring Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) artists, offering free and accessible public events across various Perth LGA's and regional hubs.

Proposed action:

- Recognise and support the unique opportunities of jazz as an art form.
- Support commissioning of new large-scale works connecting WA artists with international collaborators.
- Provide support to organisations for dedicated focus on growing youth and culturally diverse audiences.

Pillars 3 and 4: Centrality of the Artist and Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Recommendation: Acknowledgement of the support ecosystem for artists and infrastructure

It's important to recognise that cultural infrastructure extends beyond the theatre. Every aspect within our theatres, concert halls and galleries are designed, from the set, lighting and costumes, to the graphic and web design which support promotion.

Currently, lighting technicians and costume designers are mentioned only in passing in the introduction to the Policy (at page 13).

Proposed actions:

- Investment in physical assets and support for artists must be complemented by investment in the people who animate these assets and enhance their productivity – including the people who design and make the sets, lighting and costumes.

Pillar 5: Engaging the Audience

Recommendation: Balance online opportunities with a focus on in-person connection

The current Policy includes a significant discussion of engaging audiences through digital games and details action items to support gaming (pages 85-86) but leaves unexplored significant opportunities to engage through other activities.

While acknowledging the economic benefits of digital games, there are downsides – particularly for children, including potential social isolation.

Gaming may offer online connection but lacks the nuances of face-to-face interaction that can be found in live music making with others. Studies have shown this can impair real-life social development, leading to loneliness and social anxiety.

Many of the documented benefits of arts, culture and creativity are derived from in-person activities and participation.

Proposed action:

- In light of the Australian Government's 2025 social media ban for young people, introduced to protect their safety and wellbeing online, the Policy's current focus on digital gaming should be reconsidered.

Recommendation: Expand support for music festivals

Perth International Jazz Festival is one of shrinking number of live jazz festivals across the country – showcasing Australian and International talent and engaging the community.

Music festivals not only serve as critical incubators for emerging creative talent but also serve as powerful platforms elevating the global brand of the host city and nation.

Proposed actions:

- Explore opportunities to expand support for festivals, including jazz festivals as vehicles to develop, inspire and interconnect a local scene to national and international collaborators.
- In research on the national qualitative, quantitative and economic impact of music festivals (at pages 85 and 103), specifically include jazz festivals.

About Perth International Jazz Festival

The Perth International Jazz Festival is an annual 10-day music festival in Western Australia that celebrates local, national and international jazz talent.

Established in 2012, the festival spans several days and features a blend of major ticketed concerts, intimate club performances and free community events.

The festival brings diverse jazz styles, showcasing the diverse people who make this music to stages across the CBD to the suburbs and out to the regions in WA. Alongside live concerts, PIJF also features educational opportunities for musicians and attendees.

Thank You

Perth International Jazz Festival thanks the Australian Government for the opportunity to be a part of this important conversation on the National Cultural Policy and for its commitment to arts, culture and creativity.

We look forward to a new Policy which builds on the excellent work of *Revive*, strengthening the systems, investment settings, public understanding, workforce conditions and audience development strategies that make cultural life visible, sustainable and central to national life.

Yours sincerely



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www.perthjazzfest.com

