

As Director Museums and Gallery, Bathurst, leading four museums, the Central Tablelands Collections Facility and Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, I believe the barrier to an effective NCP is the lack of strategic investment. Without strategic investment culture remains constrained by an ever-diminishing funding pool.

I propose the “Regional Cultural Infrastructure Investment Fund” supporting investment capable of generating ongoing revenue, attracting partnerships and building an “economic cultural engine”.

It aligns with the *Revive* pillar “Strong Cultural Infrastructure” and directly impacts the others because funding is the core structural issue. Establishing a strategic investment framework strengthens participation, enables economic growth and unlocks the potential of Regional Australia. It addresses fragmented grant funding of small amounts across multiple organisations with limited ongoing structural impact, leading to being unable to sustain successful programs once grants run out.

Revive Pillars of *First Nations First; A Place for Every Story; Centrality of the Artist; and Engaging the Audience* all suffer from insufficient long-term funding. Addressing this would enable First Nations leadership shaped by ongoing conversations with Elders; strengthen social cohesion and respond to CaLD needs; ensure fair remuneration for artists; embed cultural infrastructure as the backbone of regional economic activity; and expand audience engagement. Without proper funding true First Nations led initiatives are stymied, we have inconsistent resourcing for CaLD programming and artists decline opportunities due to inequitable pay, all of which are national issues, but are magnified in a regional context.

The strategic play is to invest in cultural infrastructure as an economic and social enabler, enhancing civic pride and providing multiple pathways for participation. That creates the conditions for regional economies to generate their own revenue, reducing reliance on Federal funding without removing the responsibility of Government to fund culture.

To achieve this, Government could prioritise the following investments:

1. Regional Cultural Infrastructure Fund

Targeted capital investment to upgrade museums, galleries, collections facilities and multi-purpose spaces. Outcome: Invigorate local economic activity through visitation.

2. Regional Workforce and Capability Program

Investment in skills and training to activate infrastructure and support growth.

Outcome: Retention of talent in the regions and addressing skills shortages in regional areas.

3. Region-to-Region Touring and Distribution Network

Support for regional-originated exhibitions to circulate nationally. Outcome: Greater return on public investment through increased audience reach and asset use.

4. Market Development and Digital Platforms

Investment in pathways to national and international markets. Outcome: Increased earned income and reduced dependence on grant funding.

Strategic infrastructure investment enables regional communities to attract visitors, generate revenue, support artists and grow local economies—while shifting the focus from short-term funding cycles to long-term economic viability.

The lack of sustained investment is the fundamental problem. Establishing a Regional Cultural Infrastructure Investment Fund responds to this problem and aligns with *Revive* by strengthening participation, supporting artists and enabling regions to generate enduring cultural and economic value.