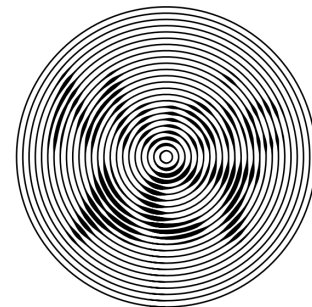




MusicACT

Submission to the Revive National Cultural Policy

Sunday, 24 May 2026

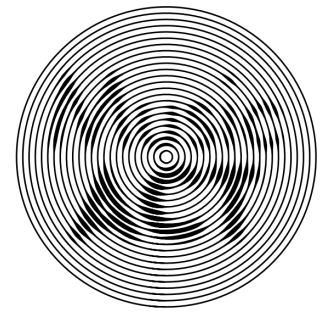
 musicact.com.au

MusicACT is supported by the ACT Government.

The Ngunnawal people have made music and fostered culture on these lands for thousands of years.

We pay our respects to their elders past, present and to come. This is and always will be Aboriginal land.





About MusicACT and This Submission

MusicACT is an advocacy organisation for musicians and the music community of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). We welcome the Revive policy framework and the opportunity it creates for frank dialogue between government and the cultural sector. This submission addresses the pillars most directly relevant to our community - Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story, Pillar 3: The Centrality of the Artist, and Pillar 5: Reaching the Audience - while recognising that all five pillars are interconnected and that systemic equity across every pillar is necessary for a truly national cultural policy.

Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story

Pillar 2: Reflecting the diversity of our stories and the contribution of all Australians

The ACT's story is unlike any other in Australia. Our community is defined as metropolitan in administrative terms, yet our cultural life operates with a distinctly regional sensibility - one shaped by a different scale, a different pace, and a creative identity that stands apart from major centres such as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Revive must grapple with the fact that 'metropolitan' is not a monolithic category. The current classification creates a two-tier system in which ACT artists face the same barriers to broader arts ecosystems as those in inner regional areas, yet cannot access equivalent levels of support. If every story is to have a place in our national culture, then the administrative frameworks underpinning policy must be flexible enough to reflect lived cultural reality - not just population density.

What we would like to see reflected in the next National Cultural Policy:

- A revised classification framework that recognises the ACT's distinct cultural geography, separate from the large metropolitan centres.
- Targeted support programs that address the specific access challenges facing artists in the ACT, equivalent to those available to inner regional peers.

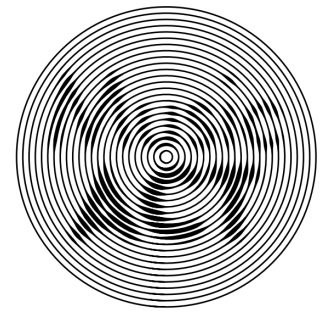
musicact.com.au

MusicACT is supported by the ACT Government.

The Ngunnawal people have made music and fostered culture on these lands for thousands of years.

We pay our respects to their elders past, present and to come. This is and always will be Aboriginal land.





Pillar 3: The Centrality of the Artist

Pillar 3: Supporting the artist as worker and celebrating their role as creators of culture

ACT musicians face a compounding set of structural disadvantages that directly undermine their capacity to sustain professional careers. The ACT Government has continued to fund arts and culture at broadly the same scale as it did in 2007-08 - a level of investment that has not kept pace with inflation, population growth, or the rising costs of maintaining a music career. This is not a criticism of one government alone; it reflects a pattern of systemic neglect that federal policy has the opportunity to address. Compounding this, the ACT's unique governance structure means there are no local government areas within the Territory. Artists elsewhere in Australia can draw on a third tier of funding through local councils. ACT musicians cannot. The result is a structural funding gap that leaves our creative community disproportionately exposed and under-resourced.

Yet despite all of this, the ACT continues to produce music of national and international significance. Artists including Teen Jesus and the Jean Teasers, Genesis Owusu, Hands Like Houses and Peking Duk are evidence of a creative culture that consistently punches above its weight. These are not outliers - they represent a region of genuine and sustained artistic vitality.

The Revive policy challenge is to build a financial foundation supportive of that vitality. MusicACT calls for:

- Increased direct federal investment in the ACT music ecosystem, specifically to offset the absence of LGA-level funding.
- A commitment to funding levels that reflect the real cost of a creative career in 2026, in line with population growth and inflation.
- Recognition within Revive that structural equity for artists requires addressing jurisdictional funding anomalies, not only national averages.

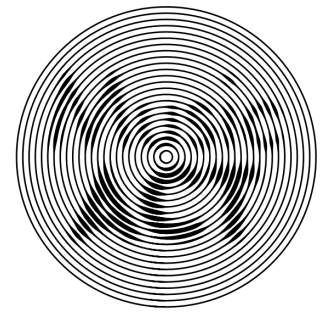
musicact.com.au

MusicACT is supported by the ACT Government.

The Ngunnawal people have made music and fostered culture on these lands for thousands of years.

We pay our respects to their elders past, present and to come. This is and always will be Aboriginal land.





Pillar 5: Reaching the Audience

Pillar 5: Ensuring our stories reach the people at home and abroad

A vibrant music system depends on live connection - between artists and audiences, and between artists across regions. Currently, there are no touring incentives for musicians based in larger metropolitan areas to perform in the ACT. This absence quietly and consistently cuts our local artists off from the career-building experience of sharing stages with interstate peers. Closing that gap is not only good for ACT musicians; it strengthens the connective tissue of the national music system.

MusicACT also sees a timely and largely untapped opportunity in the intersection of transport, infrastructure and cultural policy. As government investment in sustainable transport - particularly passenger rail - gathers momentum, there is a compelling case for arts and infrastructure policy to work together. Financial incentives encouraging musicians to use rail for touring (modelled on the no-cost luggage allowances already offered by domestic airlines) would reduce costs, lower the carbon footprint of touring, and open new pathways for regional and inter-regional connectivity.

Now is the moment for government departments to speak directly to one another - to ensure that the social and cultural dividends of infrastructure investment are embedded in policy from the outset, rather than retrofitted later. Cross-portfolio co-investment enables the music system to thrive across all government services.

MusicACT recommends:

- The development of touring incentives that encourage metropolitan artists to perform in the ACT, improving industry connectivity for local musicians.
- Financial incentives for musicians using sustainable transport - particularly rail - as part of touring activity.
- A cross-departmental, cross-portfolio co-investment working group across federal, state and territory governments, to embed cultural benefit considerations into transport infrastructure investment decisions.

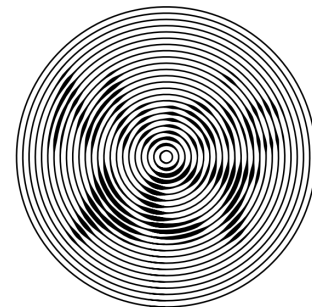
musicact.com.au

MusicACT is supported by the ACT Government.

The Ngunnawal people have made music and fostered culture on these lands for thousands of years.

We pay our respects to their elders past, present and to come. This is and always will be Aboriginal land.





Conclusion

MusicACT respectfully asks that Revive treat equity not as a principle to be stated, but as a standard to be measured. For our community, that means a cultural policy that sees the ACT clearly - not as a miniature version of Sydney or Melbourne, but as a region with its own creative identity, its own structural challenges, and its own proven capacity for cultural excellence. With the right settings, what ACT musicians have already achieved becomes the foundation for what they can build next.

 musicact.com.au

MusicACT is supported by the ACT Government.

The Ngunnawal people have made music and fostered culture on these lands for thousands of years.

We pay our respects to their elders past, present and to come. This is and always will be Aboriginal land.

