

Submission to the Review of the National Cultural Policy, Revive.

Name:

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Organisation and/or Professional Background:

Educative Evidence-Based Practices: A research group expanding the theory and research base for the Educative Evidence-Based Practices (EEBP) framework in education and specifically in music education. The EEBP framework highlights that evidence-Based Practice is not just about using research evidence, but also about valuing and using the education, skills, and experience that teachers have. Furthermore, it is also considering each student's situation and values in pedagogical decision making as well as considering classroom contexts. The foundational principle of 'educative' in the EEBP framework means positioning the care, growth and positive transformation of students at the centre of every music learning and teaching situation ([Elliot & Silverman, 2015](#)).

Music is a fundamental part of human experience, identity and culture, present across every known society, throughout history and at all life stages ([Australia Council for the Arts, 2023](#)). Through compulsory provision in the [Australian National Curriculum](#), music education is the means by which every Australian student has access to this cultural knowledge and experience. Australia's arts and culture sector depends on education for tomorrow's musicians and artists, but this is not the only purpose of music education as part of a general education. Lifelong learning in music as audience and participant begins in schools, communities and families. All young people have the right to an ongoing, culturally-affirming music education as part of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

Achievements since 2023

Since the introduction of Revive, arts and cultural activity in Australia has continued to demonstrate strong impacts across health, wellbeing, social connection and community resilience.

Revive highlights the importance of the arts and culture at the centre of Australian life. Arts education is essential to growing and sustaining the sector. Arts education warrants stronger representation and emphasis in each pillar of the National Cultural Policy.

As the recent report, *More than Notes on a Page: The Music Education Ecosystem* ([Music Australia, 2026](#)) highlights, music education is not only culturally vital, but makes a significant economic contribution. In turn, this reinforces the need for stronger recognition and investment in a renewed cultural policy.

For a vibrant arts and culture sector, arts education that is ongoing, engaging, and representative of the diversity of cultures in Australia must be accessible to every student. As [Gattenhof and Saunders \(2026\)](#) demonstrate, arts education is currently declining, with participation in senior secondary arts subjects falling nationally over the last decade. In addition, arts education in higher education has significantly fewer enrolments and numerous degree programs being discontinued. Without an appropriately educated and qualified arts teacher workforce, access to arts education in schools will remain a 'postcode lottery', with thriving arts program in some school sectors and locations while some miss out on what is

mandated in the National Curriculum and State Curricula. Disproportionately, this lack of provision and access impacts students in disadvantaged and marginalised contexts.

Why the five pillars matter

First Nations First

Challenge: Limited flexibility in government systems to support systems-wide First Nations-led, community-based and culturally grounded ways of working in music education.

Opportunity: Expand First Nations leadership and embed culturally connected approaches across arts, education, and community systems. In music education, system-wide funding for First Nations artists in schools, so that every school has access to funding for First Nations artist(s) every year.

A Place for Every Story

Challenge: Unequal access to arts participation, particularly for regional, disadvantaged, and marginalised communities.

Opportunity: Scale inclusive, community-based and school-based programs that support storytelling, identity, participation and social connection. These need to be local, place-based and reflect the diversity of cultures in Australia. Again, provide systemic annual funding so that every school and student benefits from this.

Centrality of the Artist

Challenge: Artists face precarious working conditions, low income, and poor wellbeing, limiting the sustainability of the sector.

Opportunity: Strengthen workforce support through fair pay, training, and long-term career pathways. Artists must have access to a living wage including superannuation entitlements. Arts education provides many potential opportunities for artists through short and longer-term artist-in-schools initiatives. Artists working in community organisations can provide incursions and excursions for school students. In addition, artists working in schools can also provide short term and longer-term professional learning opportunities for teachers. A strong arts and culture ecosystem working together with teachers provides many synergies and opportunities for both sectors to work together and learn from each other.

Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Challenge: Fragmented sector coordination and lack of national structures to support collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Opportunity: Establish national coordination and support systems that connect research, practice, and community outcomes. Strengthen arts education in Universities and other higher education and vocational providers to educate the arts and culture workforce. Strengthen arts education provision in schools to provide a pipeline for further post-secondary study as well as lifelong learning in community and informal settings post-school.

Engaging the Audience

Challenge: Barriers remain to sustained participation, especially in communities experiencing isolation, illness, or environmental disruption.

Opportunity: Expand community-engaged and arts-and-health programs that build connection, wellbeing, and resilience. Increase funding for arts programs that genuinely engage young people

and connect with their arts interests and cultural lives and build engagement in, through and across the arts and cultures.

Recommendations

- 1. Ensure that the importance of Music Education is meaningfully recognised in the National Cultural Policy,** recognising arts education as essential national infrastructure.
- 2. Invest in music education for every Australian,** with dedicated, sustained Commonwealth investment in music education provision across all schools, particularly government schools in regional, remote, and low socioeconomic communities. Access to ongoing, engaging, culturally-affirming, quality music education must not be determined by postcode or family income.
- 3. Build a sustainable music education workforce** by investing in initial teacher education in music, professional learning, specialist teacher pathways, and deployment models that extend access in regional and remote schools.
- 4. Restore and strengthen tertiary music education pathways,** including repeal of the Job-Ready Graduates fee increases for Creative Arts degrees, targeted investment in music and creative arts programs at regional institutions, and stronger pathways from school music education into tertiary study and professional artistic careers.

Conclusion

Arts and culture are essential to learning, wellbeing, connection and resilience across Australian education contexts and communities. The next National Cultural Policy should build on recent progress by addressing structural barriers and enabling sustainable, cross-sector practice for all Australian students.