

Carmen Chan Schoenborn

Australian Government

24 May 2026

RE: 2026 National Cultural Policy Consultation

I write to both support the submission of recommendations by Music Education: Right from the Start, and include my own comments.

As trained musician and educator, having worked in both sectors, and having assessed approximately 600 grant applications for Creative Australia and Creative Victoria, I have experience and insight into the role of the arts, its immediate impact on the identities of peoples and cultures, and financial limits on artists, organisations, schools and communities.

I support Music Education's main recommendations:

1. That education be strengthened in the National Cultural Policy;
2. That quality music education be established nationally;
3. That the education workforce is specifically invested into; and,
4. That data is tracked nationally.

Further, I would like to emphasise the importance of:

- re: national data tracking: the consideration of habitus, equity and applying appropriate perspectives to analysing data (Pillars 1 & 2);
- re: strengthening education workforce to nurture young generations which is also effectively future audience: investment into quality delivery and sustainability by educators, and removing obstacles for artists, both current and potential (Pillars 3 & 5);
- ensuring cultures and traditions are passed onto further generations, as well as allowing room for emerging and experimental behaviours that are central to our drive for innovation (Pillars 4 & 3); and,
- ensuring processes are embedded as part of the outcomes instead of only aiming for end products (Pillar 4).

In a world of artificial intelligence and consumerism, music - and the rest of creative arts - are some of the best platforms for original, individual expressions. This is vital for both our collective cultural and personal identities, and must be invested in. Directly, the economic benefits may be minimal - but the detrimental wellbeing costs otherwise is not to be neglected.

Last week, I led a group of 10-12 year old children who had just met that day and whom I had never met, to join in and play music through improvisation. These children had different levels of understanding, personalities and capabilities; through music, however, they became active participants, interacting with each other and engaging in the activity - and feeling empowered. This is the power of creative arts.

I look forward to seeing the outcomes of this consultation as both artist and educator,
Sincerely,

Carmen Chan Schoenborn

Musician (Composer, Improviser, Performer), Educator, Panel Assessor