Australian Arts Market Managers

Submission to the

National Cultural Policy Review 2026

The Australian Arts Market Managers are the eight organisations that collectively plan, deliver and strategically align Australia and New Zealand's performing arts markets: APAX, APAM (both PAC Australia), WA Showcase (CircuitWest), Q Showcase (Stage Queensland), Salon (Arts on Tour), SA Showcase (SA Presenters Association), Showcase Victoria (VAPAC), Honey Pot (Adelaide Fringe) and the PANNZ Arts Market. Together, our markets connect artists, producers and presenters across metropolitan, regional and remote Australia and New Zealand.

This submission is specifically made on behalf of the Australian arts markets, whilst still acknowledging the distinct and vital role that PANNZ plays in the Australian and international market development ecology.

Performing Arts Markets – Critical Sector Infrastructure

Performing arts markets are the single most efficient and effective mechanisms for market development; specifically the touring and performing arts engagement that connect Australian artists with audiences.

The role and function of the arts markets and the touring ecology we support are currently absent from the National Cultural Policy.

Government has invested significantly in the creation of Australian performing arts work. Arts markets are the infrastructure that converts that investment into outcomes: tours, seasons, employment and community access. Without markets, there are limited methods and opportunities for artists and producers to build presenter networks and generate performance outcomes beyond the premiere season.

Arts markets are a place to network, pitch works, identify touring opportunities, collaborate on co-commissions, and combat sector silos. They support artists at every stage — from emerging practitioners finding their first regional presentations to established companies building international careers.

Investment in performing arts markets delivers:

- Access — widespread community and audience access to the arts, with associated health, cohesion and wellbeing outcomes;
- Sustainability — longevity of works, return on investment for artists, producers and government, employment and sustainable careers; and
- Stories — the telling of Australian and First Nations stories locally, nationally and internationally.

Data and case studies from Australian arts market programs between 2015 and March 2026 are unambiguous in the reach and benefit these platforms deliver:

- 1,301 different organisations pitched 1,327 productions across 2,207 appearances across the markets in this period.
- Markets are not a one-off platform for Australian producers and artists— organisations return repeatedly across years and market tiers to pitch new works and maintain relationships with the presenters who invest in their work.

Real world examples of the impact of arts markets include:

- At APAX 2025, 74% of producers and presenters indicated they will deliver future presentations directly related to their attendance at APAX, with delegates estimating an average of 3 presentations per organisation.
- Adelaide Fringe's Honey Pot generated over 450 deals valued at $6 million in 2025, with 4,539 artists and producers engaging with 403 international and national buyers.
- Proudfoot Productions pitched *Proudfoot & Friends*, at Q Showcase with 20+ intrastate presentations now confirmed, and the work also programmed at APAX 2025 for national touring to leverage the interest already built in QLD.
- APAM 2026 saw PYT Fairfield find support for their new work *Katma* – a potential European agent, a potential anchor season for the 2028 tour, and confirmed support for remount ahead of the 2026 Toronto season; as well as a new connection with American Dance Festival, and several follow-up meetings scheduled with artists and producers to support future collaborations and presenting opportunities.
- In 2021, Whiskey & Boots pitched Mama Stitch, a verbatim work, at WA Showcase. With support from CircuitWest, Mama Stitch became the first residency-tour funded through Playing WA, and the lead artists now generate ongoing income and activity touring to outer metro and regional communities with a repertory of verbatim works.
- At Showcase Victoria 2024, 80% or programmers (presenters) reported they were interested in the works programmed, and 100% of artists in the program indicated they would apply again based on their experience.
- Come you Spirits Theatre pitched four works at Salon 2024, resulting in 4 immediate bookings that year. The relationships made at Salon resulted in a further 20 bookings through to 2027, and the company also becoming the resident theatre company at both Chatswood Concourse and Darling Quarter Theatre, Sydney, commencing in 2025.

These outcomes reach audiences across the full spectrum — from community halls and remote venues to metropolitan presenting centres — at a scale that no single funding program can replicate.

However...

The majority of Australia's performing arts markets are either unfunded, significantly under-funded, or lack multi-year commitment. This prevents longer-term strategic development, forces annual strategy cycles in place of multi-year planning, and in some cases places the existence of individual markets at risk.

> **Example: APAX — the only platform supporting national market development for the performing arts — receives no recurrent funding and currently competes for project funding in the same environment as the artists it serves.**

This is a structural failure: market infrastructure should not be in competition with the sector it exists to support.

Please see overleaf for the range of recommendations that would leverage existing government investment in the creation of work by amplifying the impact of Australian Arts Markets.

RECOMMENDATION A: Recognise Arts Markets as Cultural Infrastructure

- Formally recognise performing arts markets as cultural infrastructure within the National Cultural Policy, distinct from artist funding programs.
- Acknowledge the eight arts market managers as an established coordination infrastructure, already aligned and ready to operate as a genuine government partner at scale.

RECOMMENDATION B: Secure Multi-Year Dedicated Funding for Arts Markets

- Provide dedicated, multi-year strategic funding to Australian performing arts markets outside of competitive artist funding streams.
- Multi-year funding (3–5 years) is the single most important lever: it enables long-term strategy, reduces participation costs for artists and delegates, increases diversity of representation, and enables post-market mechanisms to convert market relationships into touring outcomes.
- Funding for market infrastructure must be non-competitive with the sector it serves.

RECOMMENDATION C: Invest in International Market Development and Touring

- Increase investment in international market development and touring for tour-ready artists with demonstrated international demand, alongside a quick-response international disruption fund.
- Invest in year-round international brokering services connecting Australian artists and producers to presenters and platforms globally.
- Establish dedicated First Nations-led international market development infrastructure — recognising First Nations international exchange as Indigenous diplomacy, not export activity.

RECOMMENDATION D: Post-Market and Year-Round Development Support

- Fund mechanisms to support artists, producers and presenters to convert market relationships into confirmed touring outcomes, including industry development grants and a centralised multi-platform production register.
- Establish a dedicated presenter attendance program, supporting presenting organisations to access works most relevant to their audiences and communities.

The infrastructure already exists. The coordination already happens. What is missing is the funding security to plan beyond the immediate cycle — and the policy recognition that makes that possible.

The Australian Arts Market Managers stand ready to work with the federal government and Creative Australia. We bring demonstrated outcomes, a decade of system-level data, and an existing coordination infrastructure. With the right investment and policy settings, Australia's performing arts market ecosystem can fulfil the promise of our ambitious and world-class cultural production systems.

Notes:

1. PAC Australia manages both the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) and the Australian Performing Arts Exchange (APAX).
   APAM is an initiative of Creative Australia and PAC Australia are the contracted service providers to deliver this platform until 2030. Please refer to PAC Australia's National Cultural Policy Submission regarding specific international market development outcomes within the context of their role as managers of APAM.
2. All other markets referred to in this document have been initiated by the organisations who currently deliver them.
   APAX – PAC Australia
   WA Showcase – CircuitWest
   Q Showcase – Stage Queensland
   Salon – Arts on Tour
   SA Showcase – SA Presenters Association
   Showcase Victoria – VAPAC
   Honey Pot – Adelaide Fringe.
3. Please also review the individual submissions from these markets and organisations which are specific to their organisational context.