

TROCADERO PROJECTS

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[Trocadero Projects](#) is an artist-run initiative supporting emerging artists to amplify their voices, ideas and creative outcomes in Melbourne's inner west. We present a diverse and experimental program of exhibitions and events. Founded in 2005 in Footscray (VIC), Trocadero became an Incorporated Association in 2007. Trocadero celebrated its 21st anniversary this year, marking the delivery of over 800 exhibitions featuring more than 1,500 emerging artists. In the last two years alone, we have delivered over 50 exhibitions and 20 public programs, worked with more than 200 artists and partnered with six organisations across a range of projects.

We are a wholly volunteer-run organisation, operating as a collective of 10 artists and arts workers from the local and broader Melbourne community. Our committee of management is supported by a dedicated and evolving pool of volunteers who ensure the daily operation of the space. We are part of a dynamic and proud network of long-standing grassroots art spaces that form the backbone of Australia's arts sector.

Our vision sees Melbourne's inner west as a leading destination for emerging artists, intersectional creative experimentation and community connection. Through collaborative and place-based creative practice, we aim to cultivate meaningful community engagement and contribute to the cultural life of an area considered one of the most disadvantaged in metropolitan Melbourne.

Trocadero's core values are Creativity, Access and Care. These values inform all aspects of our work, including programming, partnerships, funding and governance. They are reflected in our organisational goals: to provide a free platform for artists from diverse backgrounds to develop and experiment; to remove physical and social barriers to arts practice and participation; and to build a strong organisation that prioritises wellbeing.

SUBMISSION: NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY REVIEW

Our submission responds primarily to *Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story*, exploring how cultural policy can support inclusion, local and place-based practice and emerging modes of expression.

The greatest challenge to Trocadero Projects' immediate growth and long-term sustainability is the inability to access consistent, multi-year investment at state and federal levels. As a small artist-run organisation, we rely heavily on limited local government support, volunteer labour and short-term project opportunities. This significantly hinders our capacity to move beyond day-to-day survival and plan for a sustainable future.

Current funding frameworks often assume that established organisations already meet eligibility requirements for organisational funding. In practice, these criteria can exclude small but culturally significant organisations such as ours, despite our sustained contribution over the past 21 years.

A major barrier is the eligibility threshold requiring organisations to demonstrate annual revenue of at least \$100,000 for three consecutive years before being eligible to apply for multi-year funding. This creates a cycle where organisations cannot secure investment because they remain small, and remain small because they cannot secure investment.

This approach undervalues artist-run initiatives that contribute significantly despite limited turnover and demonstrates a lack of investment in the future of Australian artists who rely on spaces like ours.

Current eligibility settings also fail to account for the impacts of the COVID-19 period on organisations such as ours, which lacked the capacity to generate revenue consistently during and since that time.

We recommend that the National Cultural Policy better recognise and support micro to small arts organisations by:

- Introducing multi-year funding streams specifically for micro and small arts organisations;
- Reviewing income-based eligibility thresholds;
- Assessing cultural impact and community contribution alongside financial scale;
- Creating clearer pathways from local government support to state and federal investment

If cultural policy is to create a place for every story, funding structures must recognise that cultural value is not determined by organisational scale.

Artist-run organisations are essential cultural infrastructure. They support emerging artists, strengthen communities, expand participation and help build the future of the arts in Australia.

To sustain this contribution, policy must create equitable pathways to long-term funding and recognise the value of grassroots cultural practice.