

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

As an individual

What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you? Feel free to respond to any or all pillars:

First Nations

Music is a form of story-telling. Composition and performance are both making a substantial contribution to uniting the ancient culture of our First Nations peoples with the imported culture of western music.

A Place for Every Story

See above and under Reaching the Audience.

The Centrality of the Artist

Creative Partnerships Australia funding should be boosted to increase their ability to support artists and artistic groups. All of the current programs are dollar-for-dollar matching, which requires artists and groups to do extensive fund-raising of their own, a time-consuming and exhausting activity. More funding would allow more favourable matching ratios and/or more groups to be supported.

Musicians are typically only paid for rehearsals and performances, not for the hours of practice they have to do on their own to maintain a professional playing standard. They have to purchase and maintain their own instruments, which can be very expensive. They do their own marketing – maintaining websites, social media presence, mailing lists. They apply for grants, and prepare acquittal reports. They fund-raise. Smaller groups organise their own performances, hiring halls, purchasing rights for the use of music, having parts copied, advertising, paying ticketing companies, printing programs, paying photographers, recording companies, finding volunteers to do front-of-house – enormous amounts of unpaid work which is a distraction from their artistic endeavours. They need more support.

Until 2021, the Australian Cultural Fund charged significant fees for the fund-raising done through their program. These fees were as high or higher than a private profit-making organisation would have charged for a similar crowd-funding exercise. It was outrageous that a taxpayer-funded department should then deduct substantial fees from public donations. These fees were removed to help artists during COVID, they should not be re-introduced.

Strong Institutions

The Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) is an amazing institution. With a budget of about \$6m, they are turning out world-class classical musicians, year after year. Chamber groups are formed there that go on to win national and international awards (for a recent example, in 2022 the Affinity Quartet were awarded third prize at the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet

Competition). Groups and individual players tour nationally and internationally. Individuals are appointed as orchestral players in orchestras across the globe. As music is a universal language, these Australians act as ambassadors wherever they go.

The Australian Institute of Sport receives at least 20 times the amount of government funding that ANAM receives. Yet the investment in elite musicians yields a much longer return – elite musicians typically continue to play and contribute actively all their lives. Not only do performing careers last for maybe six decades, but musicians continue as teachers and mentors all their lives, inspiring the next generation of professionals and fostering or leading amateur and community music players and groups.

Sport is supported financially by a self-perpetuating circle comprising television, the gaming industry and commercial sponsorship. It barely needs any government support. In contrast the arts industry depends heavily on philanthropy to survive. The audiences for artistic performance are as large as those for sport. Community involvement is as great. Like sport, it helps kids to learn about teamwork. Playing chamber music is the ultimate team sport.

Reaching the Audience

Music is an international language. Different cultures can interact and inform each other through music making. Contemporary Australian compositions frequently reflect Australia's multi-cultural society.

Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why. Feel free to respond to any or all that are applicable to you:

The Centrality of the Artist

As an individual, I have been supporting classical music performance all my life, first as an audience member, and more recently as a regular donor and as a volunteer in all kinds of capacity. In that time I have become aware of how important it is that we train and support the brilliant musicians that our nation is capable of producing. I have been inspired to give and to assist by their talent and extraordinary hard work.

Strong Institutions

ANAM, together with the music faculties in universities in each state, is producing world-class musicians and composers. Music by contemporary Australian composers who often work in these institutions is being performed around the world. Supporting these institutions is a critical part of forming our national identity.

Reaching the Audience

I am personally doing my bit to support chamber music creation and performance in Victoria by founding Continuo Community Inc <https://continuo.org.au>. I hope that through the promotion of performances and commissioning of new works the organisation is helping to provide the support for the arts that has been so lacking in the past decade.

Are there any other things that you would like to see in a National Cultural Policy?

I am delighted to see the new Labor Government appoint a Minister for the Arts. I have high hopes that arts in general and music in particular will now be recognised and promoted as an important national activity.