



## **SUBMISSION BY MINDEROO FOUNDATION IN RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY CONSULTATION**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Minderoo Foundation stands ready to collaborate with government as it seeks to provide drive, direction and vision to support Australia's cultural and creative capacity.

As a philanthropic organisation, we are acutely aware that the sector stands at a threshold; still dealing with the very real impacts of the pandemic, and constantly reassessing and optimising its value and relevance in a changing world.

The purpose of our submission to the consultation is to detail our strategic funding of the arts industry and demonstrate its impact and the alignment of our programs with the five pillars of the National Cultural Policy.

We have a unique perspective on the Australian arts industry ecology. We have a track-record, we are ambitious in our vision for our cultural community, and we have the capacity to support the arts directly and in partnership with the Government.

### **ABOUT MINDEROO FOUNDATION**

Minderoo Foundation is a modern philanthropic organisation. We take on tough, persistent issues with the potential to drive massive change. We incubate ideas and accelerate impact. We push the limits of what is believed possible.

Minderoo Foundation is independent, forward thinking and seeks effective, scalable solutions. We are proudly Australian, and one of Australasia's largest philanthropies.

Through a collaborative, evidence-based approach we strive to solve major global challenges through our key initiatives. We both support and fund early-stage innovation, develop major programs on the ground in communities, and advocate for change at domestic and international policy forums.

Everything we do is driven by a deep care for people and our planet and a mission to improve the world for future generations.

### **ABOUT THE MINDEROO FOUNDATION ARTS & CULTURE INITIATIVE**

Minderoo Foundation's Arts & Culture initiative seeks to change the world through arts and culture. At Minderoo Foundation, we work to champion the social and economic value of the arts and we believe in the power of creativity to build connected, innovative and vibrant communities.

Minderoo Foundation has been an active contributor to and supporter of the arts and cultural industries for more than a decade, investing over \$20 million in the past four years alone, with many multi-year commitments and ambitions into the future. This philanthropic support sits alongside Andrew and Nicola Forrest's ongoing private support, which includes \$16 million of dividends that have flowed to seven Western Australian arts institutions since they established their Fortescue Metals Group Share Gift in 2011.

As one of the most significant private arts funders in Australia, our sustained and strategic philanthropic funding has been designed to span the ecology of a what makes a thriving industry.



Our collaborative and on the ground experience, especially in WA, gives us unique perspectives and insights into the needs of the arts community to which we respond.

Through our programs of Empowering Industry, Increasing Access, and Arts for Change, we focus on building access to audiences, supporting sustainable artistic careers, bolstering strong arts institutions and harnessing the power of arts for social change.

Participation in arts and culture has positive impacts on health, education, and social wellbeing, and a vibrant arts industry supports tens of thousands of people who work in Australia's creative industries.

Driven by this principle, and guided by Minderoo Foundation's values, we work collaboratively with high-quality organisations and artists to leverage creativity and artistic excellence to deliver meaningful impact and social change in our communities through co-created partnerships and strategic arts projects. We focus primarily on our home state of Western Australia but engage nationally and globally.

We believe collaboration is key. Through our partnerships, projects and advocacy, we work closely with those who align with our values to co-create opportunities that have long-term impacts for the sector and nation as a whole.

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## **RESPONSES TO NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY CONSULTATION**

### **Introduction**

As a long-term supporter and partner of the arts and cultural industries, Minderoo Foundation welcomes the Federal Government's commitment to establish a National Cultural Policy.

Support for and investment in Australia's national cultural and creative industries is fundamental to securing our place in the world, by the telling of diverse Australian stories, giving a platform to creative expression, and promoting inclusiveness. When properly supported and leveraged, the industry delivers a social and economic dividend that goes beyond the arts. It supports community wellbeing and provides value to educational institutions and the health sector, and increasingly works in collaboration with emerging technology and science.

Developing a National Cultural Policy is, however, just the beginning. It provides a strong foundation for great action and possibility. Minderoo Foundation sees this policy development as the start of a more robust and coordinated approach to arts investment and, through our philanthropic endeavours, we look forward to working collaboratively with government as it embarks on the implementation phase to strengthen Australia's cultural life and creative industries.

### **The value of arts and culture**

The evidence is clear; prioritising arts and culture has broad ranging economic, social, institutional and community benefits. Arts and culture are inextricably linked to our daily lives and play a central role in improving the quality and richness of life at an individual and societal level.

Participating in arts and culture delivers positive health and wellbeing impact. A New Approach has produced evidence<sup>1</sup> that shows engagement in cultural activities enhances social inclusion; reduces loneliness; increases confidence; and improves feelings of self-worth. These outcomes, in turn, have a direct and positive impact on physical and mental health. Arts and cultural tools have also been

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<sup>1</sup> A New Approach, 2020, 'Health and wellbeing: Transformative impacts of arts, culture and creativity' [Factsheet 4]. Produced by A New Approach think tank with lead delivery partner the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Canberra



used successfully to improve outcomes in terms of both prevention and treatment of physical illnesses and diseases.

Consuming and participating in arts and cultural activities helps us create ideas, develop curiosity, understand and embrace different perspectives, and build a sense of belonging<sup>2</sup>. Childhood interactions with arts and culture can influence creative thinking that continues through to adulthood, as well as equipping people to develop innovative outcomes in the workplace and in society more broadly.

As Australia starts to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, support for creativity and a healthy domestic arts industry is crucial. With the World Economic Forum noting “Creativity, originality and initiative” as one of the Top 10 skills that will be required by 2025<sup>3</sup>, we should not underestimate the economic benefits and value that a strong and sustainable sector delivers for communities across Australia, and the positive flow-on effect.

Minderoo Foundation champions the social and economic value of the arts and we see ourselves as strong collaborators with the Commonwealth in delivering meaningful and long-term outcomes. As a coalition partner of A New Approach, and research partners with UWA’s *Good Arts, Good Mental Health* project, we are funding research that has delivered evidence that will help the sector expand and thrive.

### **How Minderoo Foundation celebrates Australia’s strong, diverse, and inclusive culture**

We are pleased to note that our focus aligns with the five pillars of the National Cultural Policy and that Minderoo Foundation’s long-standing support for arts and culture complements the government’s articulated priority policy areas.

#### Reaching the Audience – increasing access

With ~30% of Australians living outside capital cities, and WA regional communities experiencing more barriers to arts participation than those in metropolitan areas, we believe that increasing audience access is a significant policy pillar. Our philanthropic work aims to build connected and creative regional communities through our investments and collaborations.

Opportunities to access, use, enjoy, connect with arts and culture are inclusive. If we want strong, healthy, and resilient communities, arts and culture must connect not just in capital cities, but also in our regional and remote communities – including by increased investment in cultural infrastructure projects (such as live music venues, arts centres, museums), support for regional programs, festivals, and tours, securing stable and reliable high-speed broadband to increase accessibility, and promoting engagement in the arts at a grassroots level.

Our audience access partners in regional Western Australia include:

- Australian Chamber Orchestra
- West Australian Opera
- Perth Festival
- Regional Arts WA
- Waringarri Aboriginal Arts
- Mowanjum Arts Centre through the State Library of WA

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<sup>2</sup> Pennington, Alison, and Ben Eltham. "Creativity in crisis: rebooting Australia’s arts and entertainment sector after COVID." (2021).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/top-10-work-skills-of-tomorrow-how-long-it-takes-to-learn-them/>



- Indigenous Arts Foundation
- Annette Carmichael Projects
- First Lights by Fremantle Biennale
- The Best Australian Yarn, national short story writing competition
- Arts Northern Rivers

### A Place for Every Story - Youth arts

We are developing a rigorous new strategy to facilitate targeted investment for children's access to the arts.

Through the work of another Minderoo Foundation initiative, Thrive By Five<sup>4</sup>, we are fortunate to have insights into the critical brain science behind early childhood development, lifelong learning, and wellbeing. Thrive By Five has identified that play-based learning and creativity help shape thinking and emotional patterns for life and influence learning, relationships, and resilience.

This evidence led us to expand our reach to youth arts practitioners and organisations, which has begun with:

- the Children's Ballet at West Australian Ballet
- Tura New Music's music program in Fitzroy Crossing
- Yvan Karlsson's non-verbal puppetry work, *The Lion Under the Sea*, by Monkey Brain Theatre

In order to create opportunities for all Australians to participate in, and contribute to arts and culture we are supportive of targeted investments for children and young people across Australia.

### Centrality of the Artists - Arts training and skill development opportunities

We invest heavily in support for our artistic workers, providing the training and skill development that a thriving workforce requires. We look for gaps that complement existing government support.

This includes:

- an international program of excellence with the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), providing support to bring acclaimed visiting artists to WAAPA
- identification and support for key career pathways with the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Blue Room Theatre and Fremantle Press
- artist awards with Sculpture by the Sea and the Lester Prize
- visiting artist training opportunities with the WA Youth Jazz Orchestra

We collaborate with our colleagues in Minderoo Foundation's Generation One initiative<sup>5</sup> to enhance employment opportunities in the arts for First Nation Australians.

We also directly support artists through our annual Minderoo Foundation Artist Fund. Designed to support mid-career artists we provide grants, residencies, and an annual \$50,000 award for artists to explore, develop, create, and present new work in Western Australia. This program will be expanding nationally and internationally in 2023.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.minderoo.org/thrive-by-five/#overview>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.minderoo.org/generation-one/>



### Strong Institutions

Strong institutions are the bedrock of the sector. Our capacity initiatives are helping to support the most critical WA institutions. Minderoo Foundation is:

- a founding partner of Black Swan’s Future Fund
- a Principal partner for *Illuminate* at the West Australian Museum
- a Principal partner for Perth Symphony Orchestra’s annual program
- a capacity partner for The Last Great Hunt’s Creative Development Program

and we collaborate closely with organisations such as Fremantle Biennale to not only support a major innovative work like the drone show *Moombaki*, but also establish a long-term, self-sustaining social enterprise that expands the reach, revenue, and impact of these drone projects.

Our capacity- style funding and commitment has helped unlock a great deal of other support, including through the Australian Government’s RISE fund<sup>6</sup>.

### Arts as a tool for change

Minderoo Foundation seeks to harness the power of arts to change hearts and minds and compel audiences to action through our Arts for Change initiatives. We are backing projects across all art forms that discuss climate change, the fragility of our environment, the eradication of modern slavery and more.

Launched in 2021, Minderoo Pictures is a \$10 million social impact film enterprise that is actively backing screen projects that make a difference.

Working with Australian film teams as well as global filmmakers, we have already invested in projects focused on plastics and human health, early childhood practices in Indigenous communities, the Western Desert Art Movement and ocean health and preservation. We are committed to strengthening our local screen industry through development programs for practitioners, working with Documentary Foundation and Screen West.

### **The role of Minderoo Foundation and philanthropy – the importance of cultural giving**

Good cultural policy is for everyone. A culturally confident nation touches the lives of all and provides benefits across communities. However, ambitious possibilities can’t be delivered in isolation, and coordinated efforts are needed across all levels of government and society.

Minderoo Foundation firmly believes that Australia’s national philanthropic giving must increase and that the current administrative impediments with the deductible gift recipient (DGR) scheme are standing in the way of greater charitable endeavours. Minderoo encourages the government to look at reforms to address this issue and mechanisms to further opportunities to promote and support cultural philanthropy at every level.

Minderoo Foundation sees its role as a convenor, collaborator, supporter, investor, and partner, working with the arts industry and with government. We will continue to advocate for the importance and impact of giving to and supporting the arts.

We encourage Federal Government initiatives that provide approaches to generate further support, philanthropy and investment into the arts and we will continue to look for ways in which Minderoo

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/rise-fund>



Foundation can collaborate and co-invest in initiatives that deliver benefits to the West Australian community and beyond.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you very much for considering our submission. Minderoo Foundation would welcome the opportunity to continue to participate in the National Cultural Policy Consultation.

We look forward to working with government and the Office for the Arts to achieve our mutual goals.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Nicola Forrest AO, Co-Chair, Minderoo Foundation, or Ella McNeill, Director, Arts & Culture.

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24 August 2022