
NEXUS ARTS

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The Inquiry into Arts and Cultural Philanthropy

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of Nexus Arts, we are submitting a response to the Parliament of Australia inquiry into Arts and Cultural Philanthropy.

Philanthropy in Australia

Australia doesn't have a culture of philanthropy; it's not valued and supported in the same way as it is in other countries such as the United Kingdom. Philanthropy is difficult to get an in road, foundations and trusts are often closed off and unreachable, when they do open applications and grant rounds, its highly competitive and the funds aren't spread as far as government grant rounds.

We believe there is a need for regular and appropriately desirable opportunities for philanthropists and organisations to meet and mingle, on a national and state level, to facilitate conversations and connections. This could be a space where the Government could take the lead, providing resources and networks to deliver and host these events, perhaps framed around existing festivals or conferences.

As most philanthropic foundations, trusts and donors are closed off to new opportunities and are not contactable, we identify those that align with the work we do and have open application rounds. Keeping across these opportunities and building the networks and in-roads takes a significant amount of work and time, in an organisation of our size and with limited resources, it can be challenging to keep across it all.

Nexus Arts

Nexus Arts are leaders in culturally diverse and intercultural artistic practice, based in Adelaide, South Australia and running since 1984. Nexus Arts fosters excellence by supporting culturally and linguistically diverse and First Nations artists with development programs and presentation opportunities, engaging broad audiences to experience diverse artistic practice. We are a non-for-profit with DGR status.

We're a medium sized arts organisation; we do important work but can't compete with larger arts organisations that have the staff and resources to service philanthropic foundations, trusts and donors. We can't provide the same level of benefit with donor circles, networking events, etc. For such, we are seeking to connect with foundations like the Ades Foundation who are more driven by social impact and want to directly support artists. We are exploring the best way to promote what we do and identify our unique offering.

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In 2025 we had a change of leadership with two new Co-CEOs, Kim Roberts & Zhao Liang, we also brought on board a new Development Manager, Ruth Weldon. With the new changes in leadership and management, we've been redesigning our fundraising and philanthropy strategy. As a small-to-medium not for profit, with a part time staffing base, working in the community cultural development space, our fundraising goals are realistic to our resources but provide a significant impact. We are excited to meet some new fundraising goals this year as we launch our donor circle program, focus in on two fundraising campaigns and aim to strike a partnership with a philanthropic foundation and trust.

Nexus & Philanthropy

We are currently supported by Ades Foundation, through a 3-year partnership 2024-2026 with an annual contribution of \$30,000 invested in our artist development programs like Interplay and Studio Residencies. Additional support comes from a small group of donors, most giving \$50-\$100 annually, and two donors giving \$1500+ each year around set fundraising campaigns.

In terms of what's worked - Creative Australia have a great suite of resources to help guide in fundraising and philanthropy, with outlined theory of building a donor base, exploring philanthropy and developing a fundraising strategy. The best resource has been the guidance and mentoring of the State Manager Development & Partnership, who is available to meet with and provide advice on our fundraising plans and campaigns.

We had a great success with AusArt Day on Thurs 23 October 2025 - this Creative Australia managed program was a focused day of giving to the arts. Through this we raised \$5200 in a day, meeting and exceeding our \$5000 target, as it also resulted in reconnecting with our main donors and building relationships with new donors.

In the past we had received philanthropic funding through the James & Diana Ramsay foundation for the *Barngarla Stories* project that happened in 2015. Since then, past and present Development Managers have continuously been seeking and exploring philanthropic funding through various foundations and trusts without much success, outside of the partnership with the Ades Foundation.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit a letter to this inquiry and look forward to hearing further developments.

Kind regards,

Ruth Weldon
Development Manager
on behalf of Co-CEOs Kim Roberts & Zhao Liang & the Nexus Arts Board