

Submission to the Inquiry into Arts and Cultural Philanthropy  
from The Boite (Vic) Inc.

### **The Boite (Vic) Inc**

The Boite is Victoria's iconic multicultural music organisation, creating opportunities for culturally diverse musicians to contribute to a richer, more inclusive Australia. Founded in 1979, it supports artists from diverse communities, promoting cultural understanding through the dynamic presentation of unique musical experiences, and nurtures creativity, collaboration, access to and active participation in the arts.

As a community based arts organisation, The Boite has served the diverse cultural communities of Melbourne and Victoria for the last 46 years. Over time our network of cultural artists has broadened and extended as new groups arrive here, bringing music, much of which has never previously been heard in this country. With a small, dedicated staff we present an annual program which provides opportunities for listening, learning, connection and collaboration.

Two of our programs support young Australians. The *Boite Schools Chorus* provides school teachers with resources and support to teach a cultural repertoire of songs. Their students participate in a combined performance in a prestigious venue, with an ensemble of the artists from whose culture the repertoire is drawn, directed by an experienced Choir leader.

Our *Portfolio* program is a capacity building opportunity for young, culturally diverse musicians working towards futures in the Music Industry. They are provided with mentoring, skills development, an EPK and resources prior to a showcase concert.

Both of these programs have developed in response to expressed needs of young artists and culturally diverse musicians. They offer the larger community access to some of the music which is now part of our cultural fabric, albeit not well recognised across the country. For the regional schools we work with we provide access to a new cohort of artists and repertoire, not otherwise accessible. The value of these programs is well recognised and highly valued by all participants.

The Boite also presents annual *Performance* series which offer opportunities to emerging artists and include large projects providing promotion, exposure and paid performances for mature and experienced artists who are part of our network.

As the current Director of The Boite, I am aware of the excellence of our artistic work. Our projects with First Nations artists are acknowledged as good practice. Our creative programs with artists across the range of ethnicities in Melbourne and Victoria are recognised for their quality and value by the cultural groups, the artistic community and by Government. The Boite has had specific and general acknowledgement of our work. Portfolio received the City of Yarra's Award for Contribution to Arts and Culture in 2025. Our History Project was awarded the 2020 Victorian Community History Award (Diversity), and The Boite received the Victorian Multicultural Award for Excellence.



**music for a  
better world**

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## **Why We need Support**

To implement and manage these programs, The Boite needs substantial support beyond Box Office income and that's why we seek funding from Government and Philanthropic donors. In many instances Government support has been accessible and is invaluable. However, it is often dependant on the larger economic situation, or in the case of local Government, on the delicate balance between spending on infrastructure and project development. Arts funding can suffer when there are other drains on Government resources.

For The Boite, the regular support of one local Philanthropic organisation – The Phil Taylor Foundation has been generous and invaluable in the last four years. In 2025 they supported us in a matched donations campaign which resulted in our best ever results for donations, a total of \$60,000 across the entire year, approximately 10% of our turnover. They have also offered our staff workshops in fundraising and marketing, and offer other opportunities such as developing podcasts and videos. From our perspective they provide a very valuable model of how philanthropy can support not for profits.

## **Connecting with Philanthropists**

Unfortunately The Boite has not found a route in to securing money from many other Philanthropics. While we have had grants from the Australian Communities Foundation and Mutual Trust for a project supporting refugee and recently arrived migrant women, we have been unable to get assistance with our projects more directly to do with musicians and performance. This is despite an increasing understanding across the community of the importance of music in people's daily lives, and the value of music education and practice in the education of children.

Various of our grant writers have attempted to secure funding for Boite projects from some of the Foundations and Trusts, with minimal success. We have received advice that we need to find Committee members who can make introductions for us to appropriate philanthropic organisations, but for groups of people who come together around a particular artistic practice or idea, and work hard to realise it, that seems an impossible task. It takes workers away from the core business of producing and presenting the work, and asks of willing and capable Committee members a proposition that is way beyond their experience.

Schemes that could call the attention of Philanthropic agencies and individuals to the particular work of small and small-to-medium organisations could be enormously helpful.

Support for an organisation that can produce such good work seems elusive and problematic. Grant application writing, can come to feel a complete waste of valuable time. Besides actual financial support, organisations like ours would benefit from introductions and recommendations which opened the doors to sources of income we haven't been able to unlock on our own.

**Therese Virtue OAM**

**Director, The Boite (Vic) Inc**

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