



Submission: Inquiry into Arts and Cultural Philanthropy

Submitted by

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1. Introduction

Ballet Without Borders (BWB) is an Australian not-for-profit established in 2016 to provide ballet education to children who would not otherwise have access. We deliver low-cost ballet programs in public schools and community settings, working in partnership with schools and local organisations. Our experience sits at the intersection of arts participation, education, social inclusion and community wellbeing.

This submission responds to the Committee's inquiry into the current state of, and opportunities to increase, philanthropic giving and private support to arts and cultural activity in Australia.

2. Current levels of philanthropic and private support (and where gaps show up)

From the perspective of a small, community-delivered arts organisation, philanthropic support is often:

- **Concentrated in major institutions and capital-city venues**, with fewer pathways for small and regional/community programs to access sustained support.
- **Project-based and short-term**, which makes it difficult to plan multi-year delivery, retain staff, and build consistent relationships with schools and communities.
- **Highly relationship-driven**, favouring organisations with established networks, dedicated fundraising capacity, and brand visibility.

BWB currently relies on a small donor base and periodic fundraising activity. Like many small arts organisations, we face resource constraints, building philanthropic income requires time, systems and specialist capability, but those are difficult to fund without philanthropic income.



3. Emerging structures and mechanisms (digital fundraising, impact investment, co-investment)

New mechanisms can help broaden participation, but they need to be accessible to smaller organisations.

Digital fundraising platforms can reduce friction for first-time donors, especially when paired with:

- clear, measurable impact statements
- simple giving options (one-off and recurring)
- matched giving campaigns
- storytelling assets that donors can share

However, many small organisations lack the resources to produce consistent content, run campaigns, and optimise digital acquisition.

Public-private co-investment models are promising for community arts delivery, particularly where arts outcomes align with education, wellbeing and social cohesion. Co-investment can:

- de-risk giving for private donors
- encourage larger gifts via matching
- support place-based programs with measurable community benefit

4. Effectiveness of current government policies and programs (and capacity-building)

Government programs that encourage philanthropy are valuable, but for small organisations the key barrier is often not willingness to give—it is **discoverability, trust and administrative burden**.

Capacity-building support is critical and should include:

- **funded fundraising capability** (training, tools, and part-time development roles)
- **support to build measurement and reporting systems** that are proportionate to organisational size
- **templates and shared services** for governance, compliance, donor stewardship and evaluation
- **visibility**-ensuring that funding does not go to the same base all the time

Without this, smaller organisations remain locked out of larger gifts and multi-year commitments.



5. Incentives and disincentives (tax, regulatory, administrative settings)

For small arts organisations, common disincentives include:

- **complexity and time costs** associated with compliance, reporting, and grant/philanthropy administration
- **uncertainty and delays** in funding decisions that disrupt delivery planning
- **high expectations for sophisticated evaluation** without funding to implement it

For donors, friction points include:

- lack of clear information about community arts organisations and their impact
- limited visibility of giving options beyond major institutions
- low awareness of recurring giving as a meaningful, manageable option

6. Measures that could increase philanthropic participation (practical recommendations)

BWB recommends the Committee consider the following initiatives to increase philanthropic participation and private support across the arts ecosystem—particularly for small, community-based organisations.

Recommendation 1: A national matched-giving program for community arts

Establish a matched giving initiative (time-limited or ongoing) that matches donations to eligible community arts organisations, with a focus on:

- regional and disadvantaged communities
- youth participation
- programs delivered through schools and community partners

This would incentivise first-time donors and encourage larger gifts.

Recommendation 2: Fundraising capability grants for small and medium arts organisations

Create dedicated capacity-building grants that fund:

- part-time fundraising/development roles
- donor CRM tools and training
- campaign development and digital acquisition
- donor stewardship systems

This would address the structural disadvantage smaller organisations face.



Recommendation 3: A simplified, tiered reporting framework

Introduce a proportionate reporting framework (tiered by organisational size and funding amount) to reduce administrative burden while maintaining transparency and accountability.

Recommendation 4: A national “discoverability” platform for arts giving

Develop or support a central, trusted platform that helps donors find and compare giving opportunities across the arts sector, including community organisations, with:

- consistent impact fields
- verified governance signals
- easy recurring giving options

Recommendation 5: Encourage co-investment models across portfolios

Support co-investment between arts, education and social policy portfolios where programs deliver multi-domain outcomes (participation, wellbeing, engagement, community connection). This would better reflect how community arts programs operate in practice.

7. Why this matters: community arts as a pipeline and a public good

Community-delivered arts programs are often a child’s first (and sometimes only) access point to structured arts education. Philanthropic support for this part of the ecosystem:

- expands participation and equity
- strengthens community connection
- builds future audiences and talent pipelines
- supports wellbeing and engagement for children and families

For BWB, philanthropic giving directly translates into more classes delivered in public schools, more children reached, and stronger partnerships with communities.

8. Closing

BWB appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. We would welcome the chance to provide further detail, including practical examples of what enables (and blocks) philanthropic support for small community arts organisations.

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