

Inquiry into the cultural and creative industries in Victoria Submission



31.01.2025



The voice for
local government

No one understands the challenges and opportunities facing Victoria in the 21st century better than local councils. From rapidly evolving technology to social changes, shifting economies to environmental pressures, our local communities and the governments that represent them—are at the forefront of multiple transformations happening simultaneously.

As the peak body for the Victorian local government sector, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) offers councils a one-stop shop of services and support to help them serve their communities.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Municipal Association of Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters, and culture. We pay our respect to Elders past and present who carry the memories, traditions, cultures, and aspirations of First Peoples, and who forge the path ahead for emerging leaders.

DISCLAIMER AND COPYRIGHT

This submission has been prepared by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). The MAV is the statutory peak body for local government in Victoria, representing all 79 municipalities within the state. © Copyright MAV

Table of contents

1. <i>Executive Summary</i>	3
2. <i>Introduction</i>	6
3. <i>Response to Terms of Reference</i>	8
1.1 <i>Inquiry Focus area 1:</i>	8
<i>Social Impact of Australian cultural policy, Revive, on Victoria’s arts and cultural industries including the Victoria’s share of national arts and cultural spending.</i>	8
1.2 <i>Regional Victoria’s share of national arts and cultural spending</i>	9
1.3 <i>Do Revive policy and relevant State Government policies and spending sufficiently support rebuilding and sustaining Victoria’s cultural and creative industries post COVID-19?</i>	11
4. <i>Conclusions/Findings</i>	14
5. <i>Recommendations</i>	15

1. Executive Summary

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee's inquiry into the cultural and creative industries in Victoria. As the peak representative and advocacy body for Victoria's 79 councils, MAV underscores the significant role that local government plays in supporting the arts and culture sector, which is central to Victoria's social, cultural, and economic fabric.

Local governments across Victoria manage libraries, art galleries, and performing arts centres, while supporting numerous First Nations heritage sites. Despite these contributions, councils face increasing financial pressures, exacerbated by cost-shifting, rate capping, and the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, local councils are increasingly forced to consider scaling back services, including those that support cultural and creative industries, which are often seen as non-essential during times of budget constraints.

A New Approach's recent report on the transformative impacts of culture and creativity¹ states that society and place, economy, innovation, health and wellbeing, education and learning, international engagement and culture are all significantly enhanced by arts and culture. We know that communities engaged in creative and cultural activity are stronger, more resilient and socially connected. The impacts far out way the investment and local government is best placed to activate a state-wide approach to ensuring a cohesive, strengthened state and national context.

MAV's submission focuses on three key areas:

- 1. The Economic and Social Impact of the Revive Policy:**
While MAV commends the Australian Government's Revive policy, which aims to revitalise the cultural and creative industries. This submission highlights the limited funding allocated and available to Victorian local government. It calls for greater recognition of the substantial contributions made by councils often facing barriers to accessing funding and grant opportunities. An equitable allocation of resources is needed for the arts and culture sector, particularly in regional Victoria, where funding disparities are more pronounced.
- 2. Regional Victoria's Share of National Arts and Cultural Spending:**
MAV's analysis reveals that regional Victoria receives only a small fraction (4.54%) of the national arts funding, despite its unique role in supporting local artists and arts activities. MAV advocates for a more balanced distribution of arts funding that reflects the specific needs of regional communities and acknowledges the critical role local governments play in delivering cultural programs and infrastructure in regional communities.
- 3. Sufficiency of Government Support Post-COVID-19:**
MAV acknowledges the efforts of both the Victorian and Australian governments in supporting the recovery of the cultural and creative industries post-COVID-19. However, MAV urges the inquiry to consider the need for more targeted funding and a coordinated approach that includes local government as a key partner in implementing arts and cultural policies. The

¹ <https://newapproach.org.au/insight-reports/transformative-impacts-of-culture-and-creativity/>

MAV's proposal for a partnership with Creative Victoria seeks to address these gaps and provide a sustainable framework for the sector's long-term recovery.

MAV emphasises the need for local government to be recognised as a vital stakeholder in Victoria's cultural and creative industries, advocating for increased funding and a coordinated, inclusive approach to sector-wide recovery. Local councils are essential in ensuring equitable access to arts and cultural activities, particularly in disadvantaged communities and regional areas, and must be supported to continue their critical work in strengthening a vibrant and inclusive cultural sector and communities across Victoria.

Recommendations

1. Social Impact of Australian cultural policy, Revive, on Victoria's arts and cultural industries including the Victoria's share of national arts and cultural spending.

1.	Ensure that a greater proportion of arts and cultural funding is allocated to Victorian local councils through establishment of a specific funding stream or quotas within grant programs for local government applicants.
2.	Broaden eligibility requirements for arts funding to accommodate local government projects and initiatives, recognising the unique capacity of councils to leverage resources, networks, and community infrastructure in delivering arts and cultural programs.
3.	Establish recurring, sustainable funding models specifically designed for local government arts and cultural programs to ensure continuity and sustainability.
4.	Redesign grant applications to reduce administrative burden, particularly for smaller, rural, and under-resourced councils.
5.	Address inequitable investment between cultural and creative sectors and sports infrastructure. Implement policy changes to ensure cultural funding is prioritised alongside sport and recreation.
6.	Encourage partnerships between local councils, arts organisations, and Creative Australia to maximise resources, share knowledge, and drive innovative approaches to cultural engagement and revitalisation.

2. Regional Victoria's share of national arts and cultural spending.

1.	Establish dedicated funding streams or regional quotas within existing grant programs to ensure regional Victoria's arts and culture sector receives a fair and equitable share of resources.
2.	Enhance local government support for regional arts as key facilitators. Provide targeted funding and capacity-building support for councils to manage facilities, employ arts staff, and deliver programs that engage local artists and communities.
3.	Provide different ways for regional arts applications to be submitted that doesn't solely rely on a digital process.
4.	Creative Australia to include regional Victoria-based companies in its four-year recurrent funding under the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework to enhance regional access to sustainable funding.

5.	Shift from one-off grants to multi-year, sustainable funding models for regional arts programs to provide ongoing support for artists and creative industries, fostering long-term sector growth and stability.
5. Do Revive policy and relevant State Government policies and spending sufficiently support rebuilding and sustaining Victoria's cultural and creative industries post COVID-19?	
1.	Embed arts and cultural initiatives into disaster recovery planning and funding, recognising their proven effectiveness in fostering healing, resilience, and community cohesion.
2.	Provide appropriate and sustainable funding to local councils to enable them to support, remunerate, and develop local cultural and creative industries. To ensure efficient, effective, and accountable resource distribution and long-term viability of the arts sector.
3.	Creative Victoria supports MAV's Partnership Proposal to provide leadership and a coordinated approach to supporting the implementation of the new Creative State Strategy across the local government sector.
4.	Australian and State Governments to establish a coordinated approach across different levels of government to support a sustainable art and culture sector and avoid duplication of resources and equitable distributions across regions, organisations, and art forms.
5.	To ensure a strong voice for Victorian local government in local arts policy discussions the MAV seeks the establishment of Intergovernmental Arts meetings between Commonwealth and State, Cultural Ministers, and MAV
6.	Recognise and support the role of local councils in organising cultural and community festivals and arts events that foster social cohesion, celebrate diversity, and bridge gaps between communities. These events contribute to a more inclusive society and should be prioritised as a key component of community wellbeing.

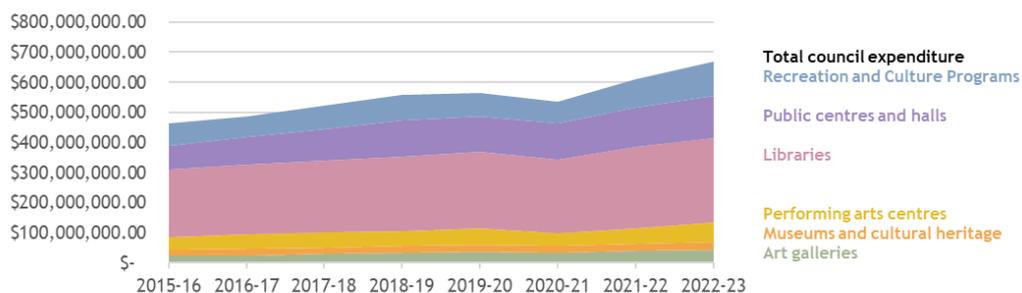
2. Introduction

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) as the legislative peak representative and advocacy body for Victoria's 79 councils welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee's inquiry into the cultural and creative industries in Victoria.

No one is more attuned to the challenges and opportunities currently facing Victoria better than local councils. From rapidly evolving technology and social change to shifting economies and environmental pressures, local communities, and the local governments that represent them, are at the forefront of multiple, simultaneous transformations, including cultural and creative industries.

The arts and culture sector make significant social, cultural, and economic contributions to Victoria which is strengthened by the substantial input and support from local government. Many councils across the state manage libraries, art galleries, performing arts centres, and support numerous First Nations heritage sites. They also oversee town halls, community centres, studios, and business hubs, where much of Victoria's place based grassroots community arts and culture thrives. As a result, local artists, cultural institutions, and stakeholders in the arts, culture, and visitor economies regard local government as essential to their sectors' viability. Since 2015-16 the investment local governments have put into the sector has increased by \$200 million per annum to reach \$670 million in 2022-23.

Local government investment into cultural and creative activities has increased by \$200m per annum since 2015-16



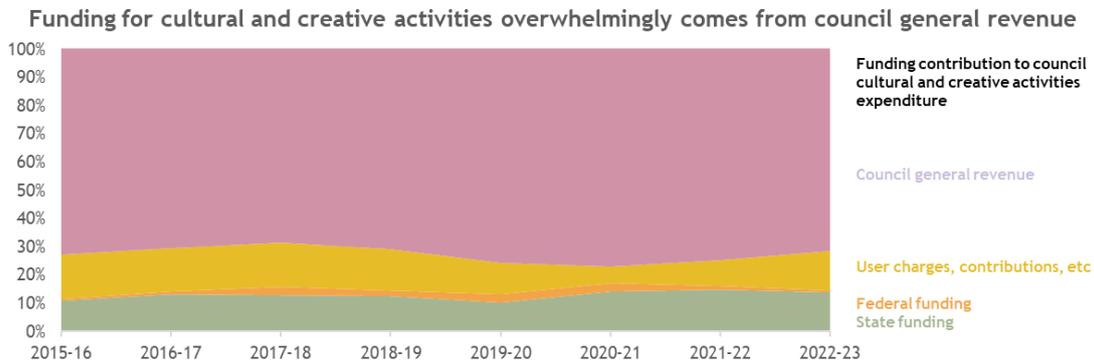
Source: MAV

Data source: Victorian Local Government Grants Commission council revenue and expenditure data

Like many sectors, Victorian councils have been heavily impacted by the economic fallout from COVID-19. Cost shifting has intensified financial pressure forcing councils to increase spending on essential services and community supports. Simultaneously Victorian councils are grappling with the accumulative effects of rate capping, limiting their ability to increase revenue and restricting their financial flexibility. This has been compounded by growing demands from ratepayers for councils to reduce rates. Balancing these pressures to secure adequate resources for meeting community needs is a priority for local government.

Many councils are also constrained by their community's capacity to pay additional costs. Often communities with the least ability to pay are the most expensive to service due to socio-economic disadvantage, small and disparate populations and/or geographic location. When councils don't have financial security there are significant impacts to local communities. As costs increase faster than revenue more councils are having to identify what functions they can no longer justify and are facing tough choices about which services to stop delivering, with cultural and creative industries

frequently among the first considered. Cultural and creative activities which are funded largely from council general revenue, and which don't have a statutory obligation attached to them, are particularly vulnerable to financial pressures.



Source: MAV

Data source: Victorian Local Government Grants Commission council revenue and expenditure data

MAV has sought input and advice from a range of Victorian councils and arts organisations to support our submission. Feedback on the relevance of questions and timing of the Inquiry had been viewed as a missed opportunity to profile the sector, with many organisations choosing not to contribute.

Given the vital role of local government with the cultural and creative industries it is important to provide input into the inquiry on behalf of our members. The MAV submission will focus on the following three focus areas:

3. The economic and social impact of the Commonwealth Government's Australian cultural policy, Revive, on Victoria's arts and cultural industries including Victoria's share of national arts and cultural spending.
4. Regional Victoria's share of national arts and cultural spending.
5. Whether the Revive policy and relevant state government policies and spending provide sufficient support and impetus to rebuild and sustain Victoria's cultural and creative industries following the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector.

3. Response to Terms of Reference

1.1 Inquiry Focus area 1:

Social Impact of Australian cultural policy, *Revive*, on Victoria's arts and cultural industries including the Victoria's share of national arts and cultural spending.

Australia's Cultural Policy *Revive*, a five-year plan provides an ambitious and contemporary agenda aimed to transform and reposition Australia's arts, entertainment and cultural sector as central to Australia, presenting a positive move towards revitalising the sector. The five interconnected pillars outline an inclusive arts and culture agenda, and the ten principles that sit across the pillars promote principles of access, equity, participation and representation in arts and cultural activities for all Australians.

The MAV commends the Australian Government's commitment to reviving the arts and cultural sector and for the restoration of funding. The MAV would however like the Government to consider the significant contribution local government makes to the sector in Victoria, and the minimal Government funding that has been received by Victorian councils.

In light of this MAV has provided the following statements in response to Victoria's share of the national arts spending:

1. Local Government often face barriers to funding opportunities due to restrictive eligibility requirements and criteria, despite their vital role in supporting local arts and culture. With financial pressures rising, local arts programs previously funded by councils are increasingly at risk. However, councils remain key stakeholders in revitalising the arts and cultural sector. They are uniquely positioned to share resources, have access to infrastructure/community spaces, have broad networks, and have a wide reach and intimate knowledge of their community. Greater sustainable arts and culture funding opportunities is required for Victorian Local Government.
2. Grant applications can be laborious particularly for less well-resourced councils especially in rural areas where they have limited or no resources to be able complete the applications. Grant programs and opportunities can also often be opaque for local government to know whether to apply. The grant application process needs to be more accessible for local government.
3. There is a significant imbalance when comparing expenditure on cultural and creative sectors and funding for the sport and recreation sector, with priority given to sport and recreation. This trend is reflected across all levels of government, despite both sectors delivering substantial benefits to health, social connectedness, and community cohesion. Arts and culture play a unique role in fostering inclusivity, strengthening social bonds, and providing critical outlets for emotional expression. They are also more likely to engage people from diverse backgrounds, including First Nations communities, people of all ages, abilities, and genders. Additionally, the arts are frequently used to support communities recovering from natural disasters such as fires and floods. Addressing this imbalance is essential to achieving a more equitable and holistic approach to community well-being and resilience.

Recommendations

1. Ensure that a greater proportion of arts and cultural funding is allocated to Victorian local councils through establishment of a specific funding stream or quotas within grant programs for local government applicants.
2. Broaden eligibility requirements for arts funding to accommodate local government projects and initiatives, recognising the unique capacity of councils to leverage resources, networks, and community infrastructure in delivering arts and cultural programs.
3. Establish recurring, sustainable funding models specifically designed for local government arts and cultural programs to ensure continuity and sustainability.
4. Redesign grant applications to reduce administrative burden, particularly for smaller, remote, and under-resourced councils.
5. Address inequitable investment between cultural and creative sectors and sports infrastructure. Implement policy changes to ensure cultural funding is prioritised alongside sport and recreation.
6. Encourage partnerships between local councils, arts organisations, and Creative Australia to maximise resources, share knowledge, and drive innovative approaches to cultural engagement and revitalisation.

1.2 Regional Victoria's share of national arts and cultural spending.

When comparing Regional Victoria's share of the national arts and cultural spending they are being disproportionately affected. The MAV identified that out of the approximately **\$79,000,000** that Creative Australia awarded to Victoria in 2023/24 only **\$3,584,000** was awarded to Regional Victorian artists and organisations. This equates to only 4.54% of the funding awarded with only one local government amongst the recipients.

Since Creative Australia is not obligated to allocate funds based on geographic location, Regional Victoria has been disproportionately disadvantaged in receiving fair and equitable funding. This creates significant access and equity issues, as regional communities face reduced opportunities to participate in arts and cultural activities due to limited funding and resources. The MAV would like the inquiry to consider the following:

1. It is vital that Regional Victoria's arts and culture sector receive a fair and equitable amount of funding so that the sector can thrive, and new artists can emerge in regional communities. Local councils can play a significant role in resourcing and supporting the sustainability of the sector.
2. The role of local government is amplified the further away they are located from metropolitan areas. In some regional settings local government is often the only presenters of tours, arts activities and events. They own facilities such as galleries, performing arts spaces and where financially viable employ staff to implement activities and engage artists.

3. Local councils in regional Victoria often know the people in their communities who have arts and culture expertise and engage them in initiatives and events. They also have intimate knowledge of their community and will know where and what events/initiatives will have the most community impact.
4. The digital divide between regional and metropolitan municipalities creates an inequality for creatives in regional Victoria. Having efficient Wi-Fi is a requirement for drafting and submitting online funding applications. This may not be a viable option for some creatives living in rural and remote areas.
5. One-off grant programs can deliver positive short-term outcomes for regional Victorians; however, these outcomes are rarely sustainable, as they often fail to provide ongoing support for artists and creative industries in regional areas.
6. Creative Australia's National Performing Arts Partnership Framework provides sustainable and recurrent arts funding however in Victoria no company based in regional Victoria has been awarded the four-year recurrent funding.
7. There has been a big turnover of staff with expertise in creative industries in Regional Victoria working in arts infrastructure, performing arts due to the stress of their roles focus on fiscal management and financial sustainability.
8. Post COVID-19 there has been a shift in community arts organisations moving to outer suburbs and the regions where it is more affordable.

Recommendations

1. Establish dedicated funding streams or regional quotas within existing grant programs to ensure Regional Victoria's arts and culture sector receives a fair and equitable share of resources.
2. Enhance local government support for regional arts as key facilitators. Provide targeted funding and capacity-building support for councils to manage facilities, employ arts staff, and deliver programs that engage local artists and communities.
3. Provide different ways for regional arts applications to be submitted that doesn't solely rely on a digital process.
4. Creative Australia to include Regional Victoria-based companies in its four-year recurrent funding under the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework to enhance regional access to sustainable funding.
5. Shift from one-off grants to multi-year, sustainable funding models for regional arts programs to provide ongoing support for artists and creative industries, fostering long-term sector growth and stability.

1.3 Do Revive policy and relevant State Government policies and spending sufficiently support rebuilding and sustaining Victoria’s cultural and creative industries post COVID-19?

The MAV acknowledges both the State and Australian Governments investment in the cultural and creative industries and see this as a positive step towards rebuilding and sustaining Victoria’s industries post COVID-19.

The MAV recognises that the function of local government is critical to delivering on the priorities of other levels of government. Councils are the most connected level of government to their communities. They can identify and respond to the needs of individual communities within their municipal area much faster than the State or Australian Government. This can take the form of responding to acute or widespread disadvantage, or in addressing significant divides within the municipality.

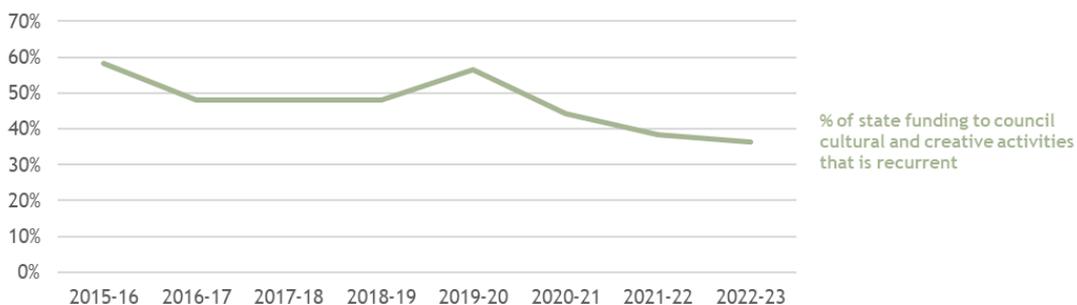
1.3.1 Victorian State Government

The MAV recently pitched to Creative Victoria a partnership proposal to work collaboratively to support the new Creative State Strategy set to be launched in June 2025. This partnership would provide capacity to convene and facilitate relationships between the State Government and councils across Victoria integrating creativity and culture with key government policy areas. It would create opportunities for new initiatives, foster new networks and Communities of Practice, and enable the sector to be on the front foot around disaster recovery.

Kate Larsen arts, cultural non-profit consultant highlighted in her submission to the Inquiry that at a State Government level, Victoria’s per-capita expenditure fell by approx. 13.5 per cent from 2007–08 to 2021–2022. Compared to the 2023–24 revised figures, the 2024–25 Budget also includes a further 1.3 per cent funding cut to creative industries access, development and innovation output”².

Where there has been increases to state funding for local government cultural and creative activities, this has largely occurred through one-off grants. This makes it challenging for councils to plan and deliver sustainable ongoing services for their communities. One-off competitive grant programs carry higher proportional administrative burden compared to on-going non-competitive grants. They can also be challenging for rural councils without the resources for dedicated grant officers to apply for.

Increases in state funding for council activities has been non-recurrent, making it challenging to plan for and deliver sustainable multi-year services



Source: MAV

Data source: Victorian Local Government Grants Commission council revenue and expenditure data

² <https://larsenkeys.com.au/category/advocacy/>

The MAV proposal outlines an efficient and effective way to assist with the rebuilding and sustaining Victoria's cultural and creative industries post COVID-19.

1.3.2 Australian Government

The Revive policies five interconnected pillars outline an inclusive arts and culture agenda with Pillar 4 highlighting the need for collaboration across government's and identifying that strong cultural infrastructure requires a framework that facilitates partnership and coordination between the Commonwealth, states and territories and local governments³. Claiming to work with all jurisdictions for joint action including transparency around the distribution of funding. However, the policy has no specific actions relating to the important role of local government in arts and culture, even though it highlights their key role due to their proximity to local communities particularly when engaging diverse and financial disadvantaged communities in the arts.

As outlined in this submission, Victorian local government is severely underfunded in its efforts to support the arts and culture sector. As the tier of government closest to the community, local government should be recognised as a key stakeholder and provided with appropriate funding to contribute to the sector's recovery and long-term sustainability.

In light of this, MAV would like the inquiry to consider the following:

1. As highly regulated bodies councils are responsible for providing good governance, responding to community needs and delivering services that benefit the wellbeing of their communities. As a key stakeholder and trusted steward, if appropriately funded, they would offer a sustainable mechanism to support and appropriately remunerate local cultural and creative industries ensuring a more efficient, effective, and accountable distribution of resources.
2. Local governments are guided by the principles set out in the Victorian Local Government Act 2020. Their efforts align well with the five Pillars outlined in the Revive Policy and would uphold the ten principles outlined in the Policy of access, equity, diversity and inclusion, ensuring that these values are reflected and embedded in their work with cultural and creative sectors.
3. MAV's partnership proposal with Creative Victoria would provide a coordinated and leadership approach to supporting the implementation of the new Creative State Strategy across the local government sector.
4. The National Local Government Cultural Network, previously funded by the Australia Council for the Arts, was an effective model for local government collaboration in supporting the sector. It ended in 2018 with the cessation of funding, and there is currently no similar strategic network in Victoria. MAV's partnership proposal would fill the gap by providing a similar model. Other outcomes would include information and data collection on arts related activities taking place within municipalities across Victoria.
5. There is currently no connection between all levels of government even though this is highlighted in the Revive policy. A cross governmental coordinated

³ <https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-culturalpolicy-8february2023.pdf>

approach is needed to ensure a sustainable and robust arts and culture sector. This would also enable the monitoring of the potential duplication and/or concentration of the distribution of resources to specific organisations, arts categories or geographical areas.

6. The Revive Policy outlines the re-establishment of intergovernmental meetings between Commonwealth, State and Territory Cultural Ministers, and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). The MAV as the Victorian Local Government peak body seeks a similar intergovernmental arrangement at a Victorian level.
7. Creative Australia cites that '97% of Australians engage with the arts in some way, either by listening to music, reading, creating art, engaging with the arts online or by attending arts and cultural events and festivals.' Cultural and community festivals and arts events held by councils are not just about bringing communities together, they also bridge gaps in understanding about diverse communities. They can show case and celebrate art from diverse communities and abilities which works towards sustaining a socially cohesive society.

Recommendations

1. Embed arts and cultural initiatives into disaster recovery planning and funding, recognising their proven effectiveness in fostering healing, resilience, and community cohesion.
2. Provide appropriate and sustainable funding to local councils to enable them to support, remunerate, and develop local cultural and creative industries. To ensure efficient, effective, and accountable resource distribution and long-term viability of the arts sector.
3. Creative Victoria supports MAV's Partnership Proposal to provide leadership and a coordinated approach to supporting the implementation of the new Creative State Strategy across the local government sector.
4. Australian and State Governments to establish a coordinated approach across different levels of government to support a sustainable art and culture sector and avoid duplication of resources and equitable distributions across regions, organisations, and art forms.
5. To ensure a strong voice for Victorian local government in local arts policy discussions the MAV seeks the establishment of Intergovernmental Arts meetings between Commonwealth and State, Cultural Ministers, and MAV.
6. Recognise and support the role of local councils in organising cultural and community festivals and arts events that foster social cohesion, celebrate diversity, and bridge gaps between communities. These events contribute to a more inclusive society and should be prioritised as a key component of community wellbeing.

4. Conclusions/Findings

In conclusion, MAV supports the Australian Government's commitment to revitalising Australia's arts and cultural sector through the *Revive* policy, which presents a forward-thinking and inclusive vision for the future of arts and culture. However, MAV emphasises the critical role of local government in the cultural landscape and the need for increased recognition and support for Victorian councils.

Local government, as the tier of government closest to communities, is uniquely positioned to drive arts and cultural initiatives that strengthen inclusivity, diversity, and community connection, particularly in regional and rural areas where resources are often limited.

Despite their pivotal role, local governments in Victoria are underfunded and face barriers to accessing much-needed arts funding. MAV calls for a more equitable distribution of funding, including support to regional Victoria, where communities and artists face unique challenges. The MAV's partnership proposal with Creative Victoria presents an opportunity for a coordinated and leadership-driven approach to strengthen the cultural sector, ensuring that local governments have the necessary resources to support a thriving arts community in Victoria.

Further, MAV advocates for a cross-government approach to ensure that the arts sector receives consistent and sustainable support from all levels of government. This includes the restoration of a strategic network for local government collaboration, similar to the National Local Government Cultural Network, which would foster better coordination and resource distribution. By increasing support for local councils, particularly in regional and remote areas, the government can ensure that arts and culture remain a central, accessible, and transformative force within Australian communities.

To fully harness the potential of the *Revive* policy and create a truly inclusive cultural sector, local governments must be empowered with the resources and support needed to continue their essential work in arts and culture. Increased funding and a more coordinated approach between all levels of government will ensure that the arts and cultural sector thrives, benefiting all Victorians and contributing to the social, cultural, and economic well-being of the State.

5. Recommendations

The following offers a complete list of recommendations from MAV to the Inquiry into Cultural and Creative Industries in Victoria

1) Social Impact of Australian cultural policy, Revive, on Victoria's arts and cultural industries including the Victoria's share of national arts and cultural spending.

1. Ensure that a greater proportion of arts and cultural funding is allocated to Victorian local councils through establishment of a specific funding stream or quotas within grant programs for local government applicants.
2. Broaden eligibility requirements for arts funding to accommodate local government projects and initiatives, recognising the unique capacity of councils to leverage resources, networks, and community infrastructure in delivering arts and cultural programs.
3. Establish recurring, sustainable funding models specifically designed for local government arts and cultural programs to ensure continuity and sustainability.
4. Redesign grant applications to reduce administrative burden, particularly for smaller, remote, and under-resourced councils.
5. Address inequitable investment between cultural and creative sectors and sports infrastructure. Implement policy changes to ensure cultural funding is prioritised alongside sport and recreation.
6. Encourage partnerships between local councils, arts organisations, and Creative Australia to maximise resources, share knowledge, and drive innovative approaches to cultural engagement and revitalisation.

2) Regional Victoria's share of national arts and cultural spending.

1. Establish dedicated funding streams or regional quotas within existing grant programs to ensure Regional Victoria's arts and culture sector receives a fair and equitable share of resources.
2. Enhance local government support for regional arts as key facilitators. Provide targeted funding and capacity-building support for councils to manage facilities, employ arts staff, and deliver programs that engage local artists and communities.
3. Provide different ways for regional arts applications to be submitted that doesn't solely rely on a digital process.
4. Creative Australia to include Regional Victoria-based companies in its four-year recurrent funding under the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework to enhance regional access to sustainable funding.
5. Shift from one-off grants to multi-year, sustainable funding models for regional arts programs to provide ongoing support for artists and creative industries, fostering long-term sector growth and stability.

5) Do Revive policy and relevant State Government policies and spending sufficiently support rebuilding and sustaining Victoria's cultural and creative industries post COVID-19?

1. Embed arts and cultural initiatives into disaster recovery planning and funding, recognising their proven effectiveness in fostering healing, resilience, and community cohesion.
2. Provide appropriate and sustainable funding to local councils to enable them to support, remunerate, and develop local cultural and creative industries. To ensure efficient, effective, and accountable resource distribution and long-term viability of the arts sector.
3. Creative Victoria supports MAV's Partnership Proposal to provide leadership and a coordinated approach to supporting the implementation of the new Creative State Strategy across the local government sector.
4. Australian and State Governments to establish a coordinated approach across different levels of government to support a sustainable art and culture sector and avoid duplication of resources and equitable distributions across regions, organisations, and art forms.
5. To ensure a strong voice for Victorian local government in local arts policy discussions the MAV seeks the establishment of Intergovernmental Arts meetings between Commonwealth and State, Cultural Ministers, and MAV.
6. Recognise and support the role of local councils in organising cultural and community festivals and arts events that foster social cohesion, celebrate diversity, and bridge gaps between communities. These events contribute to a more inclusive society and should be prioritised as a key component of community wellbeing.

MAV would be pleased to provide clarification on any information in this submission. For further information, please contact:
Kath Brackett, Director Community and Sector Development,
kbrackett@mav.asn.au.

Municipal Association of Victoria
Level 5, 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne VIC 3002
PO Box 24131, 6 Southern Cross Lane, Melbourne VIC 3000
Telephone: 03 9667 5555 Email: inquiries@mav.asn.au
www.mav.asn.au