

**Submission  
No 238**

**INQUIRY INTO THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums

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Submission to: The music and arts economy in New South Wales

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## **Introduction**

The Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums (ANSWRC) is the peak body for music education in regional New South Wales. The Association represents the 17 regional conservatoriums that together, provide music education to 30,000 students in regional New South Wales.

Regional conservatoriums have been in existence since the late 1970's and have grown from modest beginnings in Bathurst to now a network of member conservatoriums spread throughout New South Wales servicing the majority of the major towns throughout the state.

Regional conservatoriums provide music education, ranging from instrumental and vocal. Lessons are delivered by regional conservatoriums in government and non-government schools throughout the state and at conservatorium premises, while several regional conservatoriums have significant delivery via video conferencing.

Currently regional conservatoriums receive funding from the New South Wales Government through the NSW Department of Education. Funding is received for the operation of regional conservatoriums only, and regional conservatoriums must source funding for infrastructure and capital works from additional sources.

## **Policies that support spaces for music and the arts**

An issue for NSW Regional Conservatoriums is access to purpose built facilities to house conservatoriums. In many cases regional conservatoriums are housed in older council or government buildings that were not purpose built for music education and which are often unable to meet modern compliance standards. Many regional conservatoriums are currently housed in facilities that are attracting unsuitable levels of commercial rent, leaving conservatoriums spending a significant amount of funding on rental costs.

The Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums proposes the establishment of a \$2.55 Million capital development and infrastructure fund as a quarantined, extra, component of the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program. This funding should be indexed to increase on an annual basis.

It is proposed that core infrastructure funding of \$125,000 per conservatorium per year be made available for the general development of NSW regional conservatorium physical resources. It is envisaged that this funding would be applied to the upkeep and maintenance of facilities including painting, floor coverings, air-conditioning, and compliance. This funding could also be applied to the purchase of high cost instruments and other capital equipment. This funding could be accrued by individual conservatoriums from year to year as a way to plan for the purchase of major capital infrastructure. As is appropriate, this funding would then be acquitted in subsequent years.

The remaining \$425,000 would be made available on a competitive basis for more expansive capital infrastructure projects such as structural maintenance, renovations and infrastructure upgrades. This

funding could also be applied to the purchase of instruments and capital equipment beyond the scope of the core infrastructure grant.

In addition, this proposal strongly recommends the establishment of an infrastructure provision within the Department of Education for the periodic development of new regional conservatorium facilities for established regional conservatoriums. As most NSW Regional Conservatoriums are housed within community owned or government owned facilities, the ANSWRC proposes that an amount of up to \$30 million be made available every ten years for the establishment and building of new Conservatorium facilities when existing facilities either cease to be available or are no longer adequate for use by the Conservatorium. It is proposed that this funding be competitive only to fully funded regional conservatoriums within the NSW Regional Conservatorium Grants Program as the needs arise.

### **Policies that support a diverse and vibrant music and arts culture across NSW**

ANSWRC is the leading provider of music education in regional NSW and one of the leading providers of professional performances. In order to maintain and improve the level of performance throughout the regional areas of the state continued and increased support of regional conservatoriums must be ongoing. It is beneficial for NSW government to work with regional conservatoriums to develop a music and arts program in each centre where regional conservatoriums are located.

### **Conclusion**

In order to allow regional conservatoriums to expand and grow in their communities, the ANSWRC requests that a dedicated infrastructure fund be established for conservatoriums to undertake capital works, improvements and long term projects including development of new premises for established regional conservatoriums.

Yours Sincerely,

Adam Wills  
Vice – President (External)