

# BIG PICTURE GIVING:

Growing Arts Philanthropy in Australia



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# **ABOUT NOBLE AMBITION**

Noble Ambition is an Australian leader in fundraising strategy and capacity building for Boards and CEOs. We work with organisational leadership, industry and government agencies in the for-purpose sector. Our client base is national, representative of the breadth of the for-purpose sector, from Australia's largest charities to high impact start-ups.

Our noble ambition is to see transformational social impact through philanthropic investment in the forpurpose sector, at scale. To achieve this, we deliver a range of strategy and capacity building services from complex campaign counsel and bespoke strategic advice to executive coaching and online fundraising leadership courses.

Subscribe to Noble Ambition to receive the latest research findings, thought leadership pieces and capacity building services to support excellence in fundraising leadership.

To discuss your noble ambition and how we may be able to help build capacity of your organisation's fundraising leadership, please get in touch.

Read more at nobleambition.com.au

Authors:

**MELISSA SMITH** CEO & Founder, Noble Ambition

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Noble Ambition clients range nationally across the for-purpose sector including health, medical research, arts & culture, advocacy, education, international development and social services. Collectively, our clients' have in excess of \$1.5 billion in fundraising campaign ambitions in the market.

Melissa Smith, CEO & Founder, Noble Ambition, is former Global Fundraiser of the Year (IFC, 2011) and Australian Fundraiser of the Year (FIA, 2011). She has facilitated over \$40 million in philanthropic giving across education, the arts and health, working with hundreds of donors in Australia, Asia and the United States.

Melissa has led four fundraising programs from start-up to established, from Powerhouse Museum and Sydney Opera House in the arts, to University of Technology, Sydney and RMIT University, in education.

Melissa has a BA Hons (First Class, USyd), Masters of Management (UTS) and is a Churchill Fellow.

#### **NICOLE FREEMAN**

Director, Clients & Operations, Noble Ambition

Nicole joined Noble Ambition as Director of Clients and Programs in 2022. Drawing on her broad experience in the corporate and charity sectors, Nicole advises for-purpose Boards and Executives across the Australian philanthropy and fundraising market. Nicole believes in the power of philanthropy to create transformational social impact and is a champion of Next Gen leadership and female-led philanthropy.

Prior to joining Noble Ambition, Nicole worked as a lawyer in the corporate M&A teams at Landerer & Company and Clayton Utz, specialising in mergers and acquisitions, corporate structuring, directors' duties and corporations law compliance.

Nicole sits on the board of Stella and is a member of the AGNSW Atelier Foundation and previously served as a director of YWCA NSW, YWCA Australia, and as a committee member of NEXUS Australia.

Nicole has a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) and Bachelor of Laws.

Special thanks to Oranges and Sardines Foundation & Joanna Featherstone for their support on this paper.



# THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPY IN THE ARTS

"I don't want the dignity and the peace this prize provides to be a once-ina-lifetime opportunity for a handful of the lucky ones though. If you hold legislative influence, if you work in government or in philanthropy or in a position of other influence, I beg you to think of the responsibility you bear to your community, and the influence you might lead. The arts are also our Country, and I beg you to care for it."

Evelyn Araluen, 2022 Stella Prize Winner

#### Evelyn Araluen's call to action is a reminder of the significant role philanthropy can play in driving a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable arts and cultural sector.

For many arts and cultural organisations, philanthropy is already an important income stream, with donations and bequests representing as much as a third of total revenue. Compare this to higher education, Australia's leader in mega gifts and billion dollar fundraising campaigns, where donations and bequest revenue represent only a small portion of institutional revenue (~3%). Fancy gala dinners and cold grant applications alone are no longer enough to secure this level of philanthropic investment in the arts. The recordbreaking campaigns and mega gifts we have seen in recent years are the result of an increasingly sophisticated and ambitious philanthropy and fundraising sector.

This Paper seeks to equip arts and cultural leaders and fundraisers with best practice principles and case studies to meet the increasing sophistication of the market and drive greater philanthropic investment into the sector. To do this, we have had many conversations – with arts and cultural leaders who have achieved significant success in fundraising and philanthropy in giving or getting; with the artists who play a vital role in the arts and cultural ecosystem about their role in fundraising; and with government and sector bodies about their role in increasing philanthropic investment in the sector.

Consistently across these conversations three themes have emerged: vision, leadership, and collaboration.

- How do you create trust and shared vision?
- How do you lead effectively in this space?
- How do you build deep relationships and authentically collaborate to increase investment?

This Paper answers these questions and provides practical insights that can be applied by Boards, Executives, fundraisers and philanthropists working with arts and cultural organisations across the country (including those outside major cities) to drive increased philanthropic investment.



# **THE 2023 CONTEXT**

# A new era of challenge and opportunity

The current economic, political, and social climate presents both challenges and opportunities for the arts and cultural sector. As Dr Georgie McClean, Executive Director, Development and Strategic Partnerships, Australia Council for the Arts says, "The last few years and the experience of the pandemic have shown us that the arts are never more appreciated in terms of the many elements of public good and public value they bring to all of our lives. And they're also in a state of crisis, in terms of funding, skills and labour market issues, and the need for new models to emerge from this radical disruption."

The Australia Council's Report Impacts of COVID-19 on the Cultural and Creative Industries highlights the ongoing economic effects of COVID-19 on the sector. "Although arts and cultural organisations were resilient and creative in their response to COVID-19, they are still recovering from the fallout of cancelled programs and events. The impacts of loss of revenue, including sponsorship, private giving and government investment, will be long lasting." Further, the rising cost of living crisis has led to a decline in discretionary spending, with arts and recreation services recording the largest percentage fall in business turnover in November 2022 (-6.6%)<sup>1</sup>.

At the same time, we have a new Labour Federal Government and a National Cultural Policy which acknowledges the important role arts and culture can play in tackling the big challenges we face around climate, equity and constitutional recognition for first nations peoples. Both present great opportunity for the sector. As Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in his speech at the Woodford Music Festival in December 2022, "The arts are not a luxury. The arts are central to our very being. Whether it's our stories being told, or our music being played, or our world being interpreted through paint, dance, textile, stone, or clay, we cannot separate ourselves from the arts. The arts are central to our culture, and it is through the arts that we build our identity as a nation and a people. The arts contain, nurture and protect our very sense of self."

The importance of arts and culture in our civic life is reflected in the fact that almost all Australians now engage with cultural and creative products, with 98 per cent regularly participating in arts and culture, and 84 per cent saying this has a positive impact on their lives<sup>2</sup>. However, while the Australian Government's renewed commitment to arts and culture is important, the sector is well past the days where government can fund everything. Philanthropy plays a critical role in a vibrant arts ecosystem. As artist Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran says, "The arts is central to the cultural ecology of any community or society. We can monitor the values and progress of society through its investment in and the diversity of the art it produces...Philanthropy plays an important role in building the capacity of the arts sector to bring diverse projects to audiences and build a diverse cultural landscape".

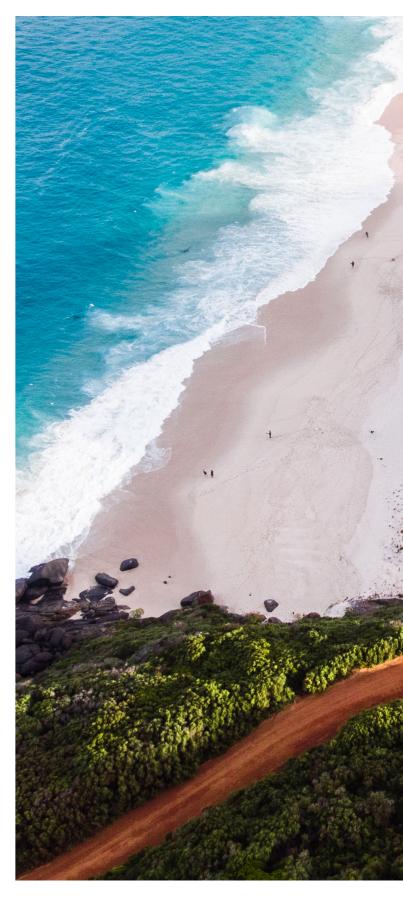
### Australian fundraising and philanthropy's coming of age

In the broader for-purpose sector, arts and culture competes with close to 60,000 charities that require funding to service the ever-growing need in Australia. Over the last few years in particular, Australian charities have been under enormous strain – with 80 per cent of service providers receiving requests for support they could not meet, and 75 per cent being financially strained during the pandemic<sup>3</sup>.

As the fundraising landscape in Australia has matured significantly in recent years, legacy models of small-scale, grass-roots fundraising are being replaced by more sophisticated and ambitious major gifts campaigns. Australian charities received a record \$12.7 billion in donations and bequests in 2020, a number that continues to rise each year<sup>4</sup>.

Across our conversations, we consistently heard the challenge arts organisations face around going after the same philanthropic prospects for major gifts within a competitive and cluttered for-purpose sector. We only have to look at the major donors to Sydney's Walsh Bay Arts Precinct renewal project to understand this challenge. Yet, the data shows that there is significant unrealised philanthropic potential in the market - 2/3 taxable income earners didn't report tax deductible donations and ~50% highest income earners didn't report any donations in 2018/19<sup>5</sup>. To be successful, arts organisations need strategies and support to widen their pool of donors beyond the 'usual suspects'.

1 ABS Monthly Business Turnover Indicator for the period November 2022



<sup>3</sup> Centre for Social Impact, Pulse Survey for For-Purpose Sector, Nov 2021

<sup>4</sup> Centre for Social Impact, High Net Wealth Giving in Australia, 2022

<sup>5</sup> Centre for Social Impact, High Net Wealth Giving in Australia, 2022

<sup>2</sup> Australia Council 2020, Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey

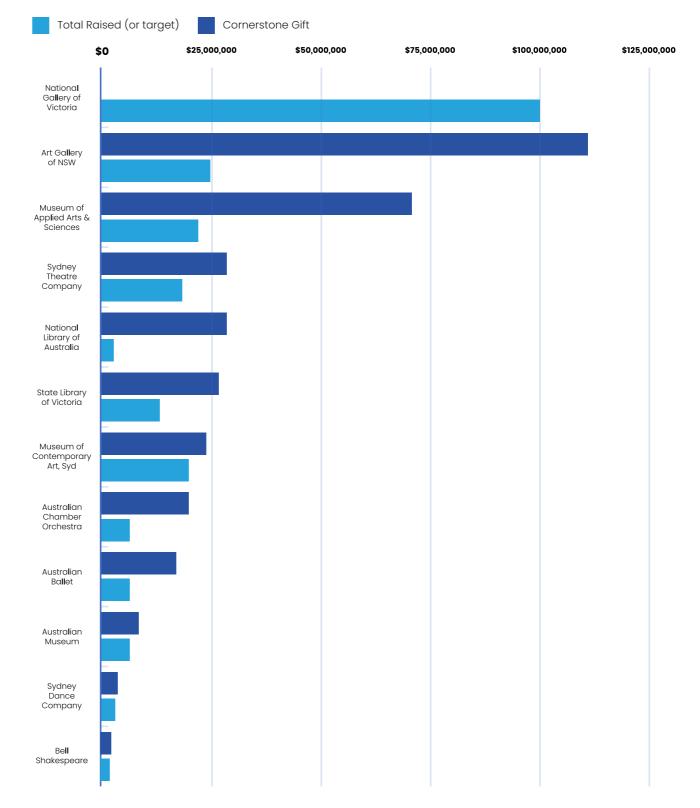
## The rise of ambition and the 'mega' gift

The combination of challenging economic factors and renewed political support for the arts alongside immense unrealised potential of HNW philanthropic giving has created an environment where fundraising leadership can compel philanthropic investment at levels not previously thought possible. The spate of record-breaking mega gifts and campaigns of late is unlike anything seen before in the fundraising sector. Noble Ambition's research (see table) captures a select 12 campaigns across visual, performing arts and libraries that have staged record-breaking campaigns for their organisations, and/or broken cornerstone gift records for the sector.

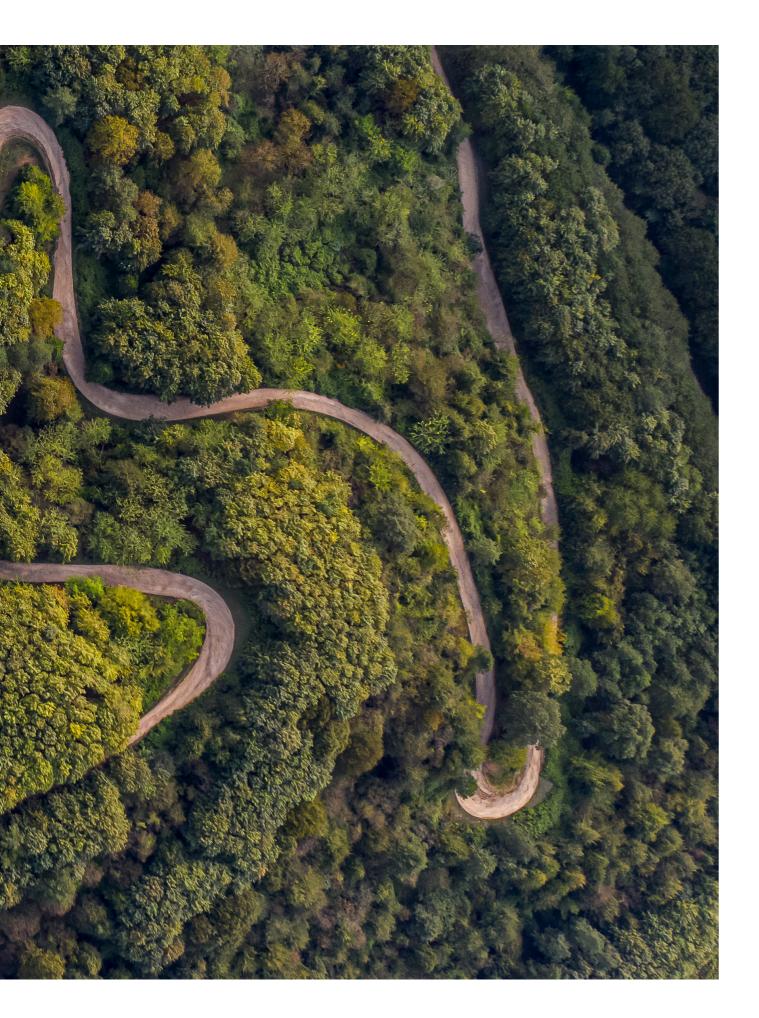
From National Gallery Victoria's \$100 million gift from Lindsay Fox AC and Paula Fox AC to Sydney Theatre Company's \$15 million gift from the Packer Family and Crown Resorts Foundation, the mega gifts in the market demonstrate that there is opportunity for arts and culture organisations to be increasingly ambitious in their fundraising aspirations.

#### Recent Cultural Fundraising Campaigns: Total Raised & Cornerstone Gifts

CAMPAIGN	TOTAL RAISED (OR TARGET)	CORNERSTONE GIFT	LARGEST DONOR
NGV CONTEMPORARY	Not Disclosed	\$100,000,000	Lindsay Fox AC& Paul Fox AC
SYDNEY MODERN	\$109,000,000	\$24,000,000	Susan and Issac Wakil Foundation
PARRAMATTA	\$70,000,000	\$20,000,000	Walker Family Foundation
WHARF REVITALISATION	\$30,000,000	\$15,000,000	Packer Family & Crown Resorts Foundation
TREASURED VOICES	\$30,000,000	\$3,000,000	Stokes Family,Ms Jane Hemstritch and Isaac Wakil Foundation (\$1m x 3 donations)
VISION 2020	\$28,000,000	\$10,000,000	Ian Potter Foundation
MORDANT WING	\$24,000,000	\$15,000,000	Mordant Family
PIER 2/3	\$16,000,000	\$5,000,000	Kerr Neilson
RAISE THE ROOF	\$15,000,000	\$8,000,000	Ian Potter Foundation
PROJECT DISCOVER	\$12,000,000	\$5,000,000	Sir Michael Hinze
PIER 4	\$7,000,000	\$5,500,000	Mordan, Neilson and Wales Families
INFINITE SPACE	\$4,000,000	\$3,000,000	The Neilson Foundation



Source: information based on publicly available information. Research & compiled by Noble Ambition.





### CASE STUDY The Susan and Isaac Wakil Foundation Growing capacity for bold, ambitious gifts

The University of Sydney's \$1 billion INSPIRED campaign and The Art Gallery of NSW's successful \$150 million Sydney Modern campaign are two examples of high-profile mega gift campaigns leading a reimagining of what is possible in Australian philanthropy. Both campaigns exemplify fundraising and philanthropy best practice and share a cornerstone donor, the Susan and Isaac Wakil Foundation.

USYD's INSPIRED campaign was purposely bold, highly ambitious and equally disciplined.<sup>6</sup> It launched with a comprehensive prospects pipeline and rigorous systems and structures on a scale not seen before. Meanwhile, AGNSW's Sydney Modem campaign had highly engaged leadership with the President, Campaign Committee Chair and Director of Development in regular conversations to secure gifts and leverage donors to attract the most significant scale gifts. These campaigns are only the beginning of the potential capacity the sector can support.

The biggest collective gift in USYD's history and the cornerstone gift to AGNSW both came from the Susan and Isaac Wakil Foundation and happened concurrently. In March 2016, the Susan and Isaac Wakil Foundation made a gift of \$35 million to support the building of the first stage of the new Camperdown Health Precinct, the Susan Wakil Health Building, as part of INSPIRED campaign. It followed the Foundation's gift in May 2015 of \$10.8 million to endow 12 nursing scholarships. Recently,

6 See Episode 3, Raising It, Interview with Rosalind Ogilvie, Vice President, Advancement, University of Sydney, available here

Mr Wakil committed a further gift of \$20 million to USYD. Together, the Wakil's gifts total over \$66 million, making them the most significant benefactors in the University's history.

In parallel, the Director of Development at the Art Gallery of NSW engaged in discussions with Mr Wakil about supporting the Gallery's Sydney Modern Project, to which The Wakil Foundation donated \$24 million. With these gifts, the once private Wakils became much bolder, more public and more ambitious about their level of investment. This was matched by the bold and compelling vision of both USYD and AGNSW and deep engagement at the most senior levels of the organisations.

The Wakil's gifts demonstrate that arts and culture does not operate in isolation. Its donors are giving across the for-purpose sector, indeed Susan Wakil's portrait sits in both USYD and AGNSW. In terms of sophistication and ambition, the arts needs to benchmark itself against not only other arts organisations but other for-purpose organisations more broadly too.

Ten years ago, this scale of giving was unimagined. Think about what is possible in the coming decade. As Rossie Ogilvie, Vice President Advancement at USYD says, "There is more scope than ever for transformational giving. And it is our task as institutions to share visionary ideas that inspire donors to change the world."

# WHAT'S DRIVING **GREATER PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT?**

### Three common themes: vision, leadership, collaboration

#### Noble Ambition and its team have been actively engaging with Boards, CEOs and philanthropists in the arts for over a decade.

During this time, we have developed a practical and culturally appropriate framework for what leadership engagement in fundraising looks like around the 4 pillars of "Give, Get, Leverage and Leadership", which we presented in the Jump on Board White Paper<sup>7</sup>. We have also presented evidence-based insights into which and how many organisations are engaging effectively in fundraising leadership in the National Benchmarking Report on Fundraising Leadership<sup>8</sup>.

With a model for best practice fundraising leadership and data around who is doing this work well, we now seek to understand how the sector is driving greater philanthropic investment.

Through our many conversations with the sector, including our most recent series of interviews for the Raising It podcast, we have consistently found three themes emerge out of the case studies of mega gifts and effective fundraising leadership:



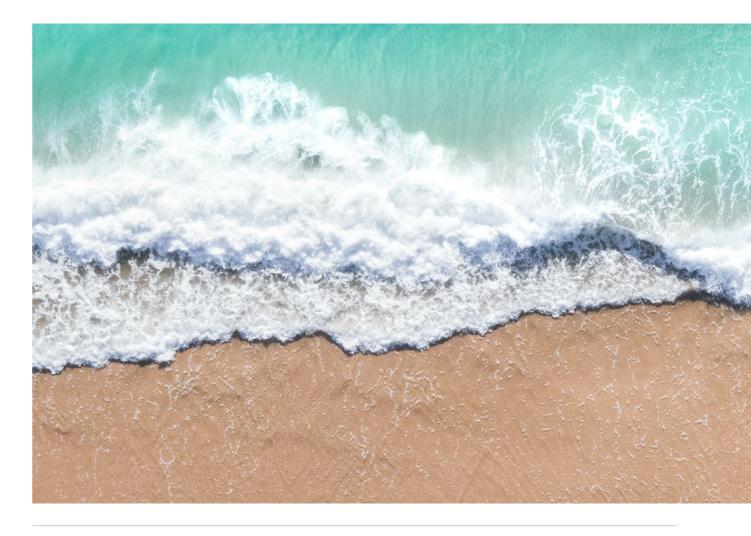
A courageous and compelling vision for impact and the role philanthropy can play in achieving that vision is vital to securing philanthropic investment.

## Why is 'vision' important?

Bold vision yields bold gifts. Donors want to be part of a cause that is bigger than themselves and create lasting impact. A clear vision helps to attract support and align donors around the future direction of the organisation.

Whether it's a new building, programs, or operations for the next three years - articulating your organisation's need (the "what") within the context of its broader vision for impact (the "why") enables donors to build a connection to the cause, feel that they are investing in the organisation's future and can measure their impact.

From the State Library of Victoria<sup>9</sup> to the Australian Ballet<sup>10</sup>, we have seen the critical role of vison in major campaigns and philanthropic investment. In the following two case studies of NERAM's current capital campaign and Ben Quilty's founding of Ngununggula, vision is critical in fundraising for all organisations, regardless of scale or location.



- 9 See Episode 2, How We Raised It, Interview with Kate Torney OAM, former Director, State Library of Victoria, available here: https://nobleambition.com.au/ podcast/episode-2/
- episode-5/



#### VISION

Vision is bolder, and targets are based on what the organisation needs rather than what they think the market can bear. This vision is then articulated in a compelling way that captures the ambitions and imagination of donors.



### **LEADERSHIP**

Engagement of leadership, particularly Boards, to back their teams (including fundraisers) and actively advocate for the organisation amongst their networks and within the philanthropic community.



#### **COLLABORATION**

Stronger relationships and levels of trust are being built between organisations and philanthropists to command a higher level of investment.

7 Noble Ambition, 2019, Jump on Board, High-Performing Not-For-Profit Boards in Fundraising, available here: https://nobleambition.com.au/high-performing-nfpboards-in-fundraisina/

8 Noble Ambition, 2021, National Benchmarking Report on Fundraising Leadership, available here: https://nobleambition.com.au/national-benchmarking-reporton-fundraising-leadership/

10 See Episode 5, How We Raised It, Interview with Libby Christie AM, Executive Director, The Australian Ballet, available here: https://nobleambition.com.au/podcast/



### CASE STUDY **New England Regional Art Museum** & its visionary donors

New England Regional Art Museum (NERAM) is a leading cultural and arts tourism destination in regional Australia and home to one of the nation's most significant art collections outside the capital cities. How NERAM attracted cornerstone investment to kickstart a capital campaign is an example of how a shared big picture vision can bring organisations and donors together, even when the idea of how to achieve that vision originally differs.

Geoff Fox and Gorm Kirsch moved to Armidale in 2008, where Geoff had attended university in the early 1960s. Thinking about how they could give back to the community, they tied this to their interest in art and architecture by asking what would happen if NERAM had an inspiring new building?

NERAM already had refurbishment plans to address existing structural, operational and regulatory issues, but Geoff and Gorm felt they were 'band-aid' solutions. Their alternative vision for NERAM was informed by the same spirit as civic leaders in Bilbao, Spain who conceived a transformational museum project as a part a wider plan to turn around an industrial city in decline.

An initial conversation with Rachael Parsons, Art Museum Director, over a glass of wine highlighted that while they shared the same overall goal, their visions for how to improve NERAM's facilities did not align. In response to Geoff and Gorm's

enthusiasm, NERAM had undertaken a detailed needs and sustainability assessment to work out how to best support its broader objectives of a sustainable, meaningful, and exciting future for the gallery.

Through many conversations, Rachael listened to Geoff and Gorm's ideas and interests while communicating NERAM's broader strategic direction and remaining honest about its capacity and limitations. As a result of this process, Geoff and Gorm made an initial donation of \$250,000 to fund work on the business case and master plan.

Since then, Geoff and Gorm have pledged a further \$1.5 million towards the project: \$1 million for the capital build and \$500,000 for fit-out and business systems to assure effective management and administration of the museum. They have also made a bequest of at least 50 per cent of their estate to the NERAM Foundation. Of the process, Geoff and Gorm said, "Rachael's professionalism, diligence and commitment to the concept inspired us and gave us the confidence that our vision resonated not just with her but with the wider NERAM community of Board, staff and volunteers (all of whom she had consulted)."

Rachel's investment in her relationship with Geoff and Gorm ensured that NERAM's donors were part of the process and through it, over time, their goals aligned to become a new shared vision.



### CASE STUDY Ben Quilty and Ngununggula Turning personal passion into collective ambition

From the Art Gallery of NSW and UNHCR in Afghanistan, to his most recent project leading the establishment of Ngununggula, the first regional gallery in the Southern Highlands, Ben Quilty has arguably raised more money than any other Australian artist to date. His story demonstrates how a personal vision can become a collective ambition for impact.

Whether it be regional arts or human rights, Ben is driven by a deeply personal connection to the causes which he supports. "I'm not going to raise money for something I don't believe in," he says, "Ngununggula was really, really, really important for me. My children grew up here. I watched them get on school buses and go down the Hume Highway to the NGA for any exhibition. And in primary school, they did it twice in seven years. Hume Highway is also the most dangerous road in Australia, and my tiny little children getting on this school bus, it's mental."

Ben's vision for a local gallery and belief in the value it would bring to the community drove his ambition and persistence to get Ngununggula off the ground. He spent five years fundraising, calling on favours, and where necessary, arguing for the project, and ultimately raised just over \$8 million, including \$3.5 million from the State Government and \$400,000 from the Federal Government. While the process was undoubtedly challenging, Ben dealt with the pushback from some parts of the community and knockbacks from potential

donors by returning to his steadfast belief in the project, as he says, "For me, I'm asking for money for a much bigger thing than myself. And that's not hard. If it's really important, then that's not so hard."

Over time, by engaging authentically with donors, leveraging his reputation to build trust and developing deep relationships, he was able to garner the support of the community and build a shared vision for the gallery. As he says, "The philanthropists, yeah, they're just friends. We share the same vision. If they're philanthropists who support something you believe in, then you share a vision that if this thing is successful, then it makes for a better place to live and a better place to bring up children in a healthier community."

# **HOW DO YOU ARTICULATE A VISION?**

Articulating a compelling vision requires more than coming up with a vision statement. You must be able to:

- Understand where your organisation sits within the market
- Demonstrate its unique value proposition and impact on the community to date
- Identify the impact the organisation seeks to achieve into the future
- Articulate why philanthropy is so important in enabling this vision

## How do you share it?

Sharing a vision requires a sustained investment in relationship building through multiple conversations to build trust, foster a connection to the cause and rally donors around a common goal. At first, it means articulating the vision in a clear, accessible way so that someone who is not an expert in the sector can understand you.

In building an emotional connection to the cause for donors, it is useful to articulate why the vision is so important to the organisation and to you personally (either as a board member or executive). Donors are building a relationship with the organisation and the individuals themselves.

Be well prepared and thorough but avoid talking at donors or overloading them with everything all at once.

At the same time, seek to understand the donor's philanthropy goals more broadly and how your organisation aligns to their values, prior experiences, what has worked well and what some of their funding successes to date look like.

"Ask questions, learn what people's interests and passions are, ask what they love about your organisation, be generous with your time and genuine in your interest in your community. Then, when there is a project or campaign that is relevant to the interests and passions of members of your community, start by talking about the project and why you are excited about it, ask for advice and feedback on the project, see if a potential donor is interested, listen to their ideas... and then start talking about your fundraising goals and needs."

- Rachael Parsons, Art Museum Director, NERAM

In developing your case for impact, you will need to draw on data and case studies to help you substantiate your case, demonstrate your organisation's strengths and add flavour and depth to the narrative.

Sometimes, organisations will need to navigate between the donor's vision and its own strategic priorities. By building on shared values and engaging honestly and openly to establish trust, it is possible to bring donors on the journey so that two visions become one.

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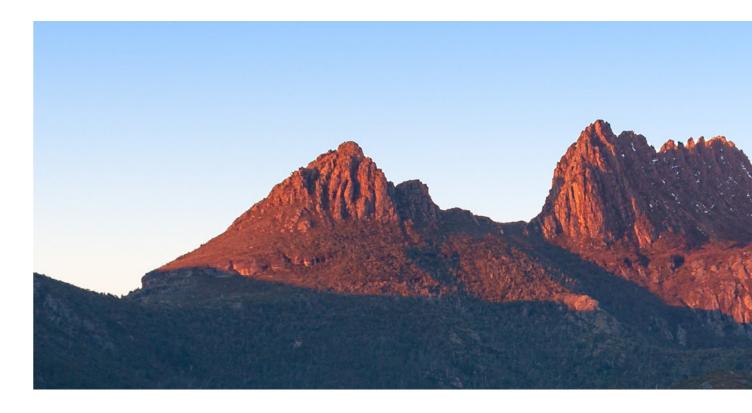
Driving greater philanthropic investment in the arts requires leadership both in terms of the formal roles of who's driving fundraising and philanthropy (Board, CEOs, fundraisers and philanthropists) and the behaviours around how they engage in fundraising.

## Why is leadership so important?

In the current highly competitive philanthropy and fundraising market, the role of for-purpose leadership is critical. The survey for Noble Ambition's National Benchmarking Report on Fundraising Leadership revealed significant opportunity in this space.

While 89 per cent of respondents indicated Board engagement in fundraising was important or very important, and 95 per cent of respondents indicated CEO engagement in fundraising was important or very important, only 8 per cent collectively rated their organisation's Board, CEO and Head of Fundraising as strong or very strong performers in this space.

High performing major gifts programs require leadership. Unlike traditional mass fundraising



<sup>11</sup> See Episode 4, How We Raised It, Interview with Peter Evans, Artistic Director, Bell Shakespeare, available here: https://nobleambition.com.au/podcast/ episode-4/

methods that are largely operational and can be driven by fundraising teams alone, major gifts require leadership at the Board and Executive level to drive strategic and cultural change, and lead in advocacy and personal giving.

Fundamentally, major donors are inspired by strong and engaging leaders and their investment is in leadership they trust and believe in.

We have seen stories of great leadership from the Artistic Director at Bell Shakespeare<sup>11</sup> and the Executive Director at Sydney Theatre Company<sup>12</sup>, but what does leadership look like from the perspective of arts philanthropists? Here we can learn much from Paula McLean's \$1 million gift to Stella and the evolution of the Neilson Foundation.

12 See Episode 3, How We Raised It, Interview with Patrick McIntyre, former Executive Director, Sydney Theatre Company, available here: https://nobleambition.com

au/podcast/episode-3/



Photo Credit: Marie-Luise Skibbe.

### CASE STUDY **Paula McLean and Stella Forever** *Extraordinary female-led leadership in philanthropy*

Stella champions the work of Australian women and non-binary writers by awarding the annual Stella Prize – a major literary award celebrating Australian women's writing. In 2016, with the support of visionary patrons, Paula McLean and Ellen Koshland, Stella launched the Stella Forever Fund to endow the prize money for the Stella Prize in perpetuity.

In July 2021, Stella decided to undertake an ambitious fundraising campaign to raise the remaining \$2 million to secure the \$3 million endowment in celebration of its 10th anniversary. They had 10 months, a great name, loyal donors, an army of advocates in writers, publishers and readers but had only ever managed to raise just over \$400,000 in operating each year.

The decision to undertake a \$2 million fundraising campaign was a bold leap from Stella's year on year fundraising and took courage to pull off. The Board committed to driving fundraising as a strategic priority, investing time and resources to the campaign. Importantly, this included a 100 per cent commitment to giving. A working group of select Board members, the Executive Director and fundraiser ran the campaign, made asks and stewarded donors, with weekly checkins to monitor progress and report against key milestones.

Inspired by the vision and commitment of the Board and Executive, Paula McLean, philanthropist and former Stella deputy chair, made an gift of \$1 million three months into the campaign. Paula's gift demonstrated extraordinary female philanthropic leadership in terms of the significance of the gift, its timing in the campaign and Paula's decision to go public as a deliberate call to action to other women. It remains one of the largest donations to Australian literature. Afterwards, Paula continued her involvement. Working closely with the fundraising committee, advocating for the organisation amongst her networks and speaking at each of the fundraising dinners.

"It is very important that female philanthropists take ownership of their philanthropy and serve as role models for other women. To do that they need to see that the media such gifts generate plays an instrumental role in generating donations for a match campaign such as Stella's and encourages other women to step up with their own philanthropy." – Paula McLean

With 10 days to go and \$10,000 to raise, Stella turned to its broader community as part of the grassroots phase of the campaign. The response from women around Australia was immediate, helping to raise the final amount to endow the prize in perpetuity.

At every stage of the Stella Forever campaign, many people showed how bold leadership can lay the groundwork for others to step up and join them. Their collective vision and leadership succeeded in safeguarding the Stella Prize on behalf of Australian female and non-binary writers, and readers for generations to come.



### CASE STUDY The Neilson Foundation Evolving philanthropic leadership

The Neilson Foundation was established in 2007 by Kerr Neilson and his daughters, Paris and Beau, to support both the arts and charities that work towards social cohesion. Since inception, the Foundation has disbursed over \$140 million, a significant proportion of which has gone to the arts, and in particular to initiatives that improve accessibility to the arts, with the aim of enriching cultural diversity within Australian society. Awarded the 2022 Creative Partnerships Award for Philanthropy Leadership, the Foundation's story demonstrates the way philanthropic leadership evolves as philanthropists listen to the needs of the organisations they support, take on leadership and advocacy roles and leverage their giving.

In its early years, the Foundation did not support capital campaigns. The Foundation's founders believed that it was the role of government to build infrastructure. However, as the Foundation has grown and matured, a turnaround has ensued. Two of its most recent gifts have been to fund capital: \$5 million to Griffin Theatre Company to purchase the iconic SBW Stables Theatre in Kings Cross and \$3 million to Bell Shakespeare in support of its new flexible studio and theatre space at Pier 2/3 within the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct.

In both examples, the Foundation's gifts are the largest the organisation has received to date and represent the Foundation's commitment to being led by the needs of the organisation.

Over the years, the Foundation has evolved its depth of understanding of philanthropy. Integral to this process has been Paris Neilson's experiences on for-purpose boards, including the Art Gallery of NSW and Biennale of Sydney; and Beau's experience on the board of Powerhouse Museum. Those experiences have led to better understanding of how arts organisations operate and the significant role philanthropy plays in helping them realise their vision.

Having sat on both sides of the fundraising relationship, Paris advocates for greater transparency and frankness between philanthropists and arts organisations to build real collaboration.

"Great relationships [are built] where people are just straight. We don't need to hear the pretty version; we just want to hear where things actually are at. Like any relationship, there has to be honesty." - Paris Neilson

More recently, the Foundation has been thinking about how to scale its giving by using its gifts to leverage support from government and other philanthropists. In the case of Griffin, the Foundation's \$5 million gift helped to unlock matched funding from NSW Government.

"Our bigger plan is to kind of help organisations to a point where others can then come in, whether it's government, particularly government, where they can then see the value of that organisation. You allow them to get to a point where government can't not take notice of them and understand their value and the need for them to get on board too." – Paris Neilson

What has remained consistent throughout the Foundation's evolution is an attitude that philanthropy doesn't have to be that hard and philanthropists should just get on with it. As Paris says, "At the end of the day, it's not rocket science. We're just giving money away."

# **HOW DO WE DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP?**

Every leadership role within an arts organisation increasingly has a role to play in fundraising, including Board, Executive, fundraiser, artists (as relevant) and philanthropists. Given that the need is so great, and the vision is so compelling, fundraising is no longer the remit of one person but the responsibility of a collective coalition of stakeholders, driven to achieve end goals.

## **Board leadership**

At Board level, leadership means having conversations about what funding the organisation needs to achieve its vision and what role the Board should play in fundraising. To achieve best practice, Boards should to:

- Commit to 100 per cent participation in giving to the organisation (appropriate to individuals' financial circumstance). This demonstrates commitment, impacts staff morale and encourages other philanthropists to give.
- Identify select Board member(s) willing to making significant philanthropic gifts to achieve fundraising targets, demonstrate leadership and galvanise philanthropic community.
- Advocate on behalf of the organisation to peers and philanthropists.
- Leverage government funding to secure additional philanthropic investment.
- Drive strategic and cultural change to embed a culture of philanthropy in the organisation.

"Every board member and the ED gave to the campaign which also told me that as an organisation they were both invested and fully committed". - Paula McLean

"There are a lot of people that just love being on boards and love the kudos of it all. And as a philanthropist you want to see that this an authentic thing and when they give you go, okay, they really believe in it, so I should too". - Paris Neilson

### **Executive leadership**

For the Executive (CEO/Executive Director and Artistic Director), leadership means committing to lead the organisation's philanthropy and fundraising activities in terms of articulating vision, prioritising strategy, embedding donor relationships and leading a culture of philanthropy. Practically, this looks like the CEO/ED spending up to 30 per cent of time on strategy development, vision articulation and donor engagement and the AD dedicating between 10-20 per cent of time engaging with donors, sharing his/her artistic vision and practices, connecting donors and artists and embedding donors into the fabric of the organisation.

## **Fundraising leadership**

The role of a fundraiser is changing. No longer purely focused on tactics, operations or making the asks, a fundraiser's role includes enabling the fundraising capacity of other leaders within the organisation to drive collective achievement. Fundraisers demonstrate leadership by embedding an integrated fundraising leadership model incorporating Board, CEO and team, and genuinely working collaboratively across the various stakeholders. Great fundraisers demonstrate high levels of strategic thinking, exceptional emotional intelligence, capacity to effectively manage up, persuade and steward a coalition of stakeholders to achieve organisational goals.



# Philanthropic leadership

Philanthropists are also taking a more active role in advocating for organisations and leveraging giving. Examples of philanthropic leadership behaviours include finding organisations that are aligned in values, giving multi-year, unrestricted funding, sharing power in the right ways with communities and participatory decision making.<sup>13</sup> This is particularly relevant for funding initiatives that directly address systemic injustices and inequalities.

## Artistic leadership

Artists can play an important leadership role in advocating on behalf of an organisation. In many ways, due to their lived experience of the sector, artists are some of the most compelling advocates to speak to why philanthropy is so important for arts organisations. When fundraising for AGNSW, Ben Quilty found that being an artist gave him greater credibility and trust amongst donors and even if they did not know him personally, his ask "came with its own truth". However, advocating and fundraising for organisations can pose challenges for artists in terms of economic impact to their career and disruption to art practice. For example, Ben Quilty's work was not able to be collected by AGNSW during his 9-year tenure on the Board. Organisations need to be sensitive to these challenges so as to best engage artists as leaders and advocates.

"The further I go along, and the more boards that I've sat on, the more [I think] there should be artists on those boards. The artist argues from a very real place of experience and from their life. So there needs to be more of those people on those boards."

**Ben Quilty** 

<sup>13</sup> Philanthropy Australia, 2023, The Better Giving Telescope, available here: https://www.philanthropy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Better-Philanthropy-Telescope-Report-December-2022.pd

Bold vision and strong leadership are vital but securing philanthropic investment that has transformational impact requires meaningful collaboration between stakeholders across the sector.

"For most people who love the arts, they're not just committed to one art form, they love many art forms and the arts needs to lift each other up together."

Clare Ainsworth Herschell, Philanthropist and Founder Groundswell

### What is collaboration?

Arts and culture are inherently collaborative endeavours, from the artist's interaction with the subject matter to the audience's interaction with an exhibition or performance. However, what does collaboration mean in terms of increasing philanthropic investment in the arts?

Collaboration involves actively building a relationship with donors and stakeholders to make them part of your organisation's community of supporters so they become invested in the future of the organisation. Collaboration means realising a vision together through sustained conversation to build a depth of trust and confidence. It often involves sharing power to address the structural imbalances that stifle meaningful participation by important stakeholders.

Collaboration reinforces and informs culture. As an organisation collaborates 1:1 with its donors and stakeholders, it begins to build a culture of philanthropy and engagement and embeds that culture within the organisation.

## Why is collaboration important?

An organisation might secure a one-off mega gift through a clearly articulated vision and engaged leaders, but to build a long-term pipeline of philanthropic support you need to build deep relationships across a community of stakeholders.

By broadly engaging with the various stakeholders in the sector, including artists and First Nations communities, our arts and culture will be richer and the levels of investment by the philanthropic communities higher and more sustainable. For insights into how effective collaboration works from a philanthropist's perspective, we look to the Oranges & Sardines Foundation; and from an organisation's perspective, the Australian Museum.





### CASE STUDY MCA and the Oranges & Sardines Foundation Leaning in to trust and collaboration

The Museum of Contemporary Art's Maningrida Collection of Aboriginal Art consists of approximately 600 works in fibre and other materials by Maningrida artists, most of whom are women. The Collection is held in trust by the MCA for the people of Maningrida on a long-term basis under a unique cultural agreement.

In 2018, a three-way partnership between Oranges & Sardines Foundation, MCA and the community was established. Their story demonstrates from a philanthropist's perspective, the trust, openness, flexibility and commitment required to meaningfully collaborate in the arts. Its objective was to conduct deeper research into the artists and artworks in the collection, and develop a new way of archiving, labelling, identifying and working with the collection, and the First Nations community.

"I think collaboration is about trust, strong relationships, listening and giving all of the collaborators space to grow and learn together. It is about making decisions in a cooperative and respectful way that values the different knowledges and skills everyone brings." - Johanna Featherstone

The three-way partnership required strong relationships and deep trust between the parties.

As Johanna Featherstone, Chair, Oranges & Sardines Foundation, says, "The project involved many levels of trust – trust in the community leadership, trust in the MCA's processes and transparency as the go-between".

To ensure that the project was led by the community, the Foundation needed to be open and flexible about the terms of the project. As Johanna says, "It is important to go into a philanthropic space without a clear, definite idea or answer as to what impact will look like so that the people we are supporting and collaborating with can define the answer to that question." The idea for a whole new way of archiving, labelling, identifying and working with the First Nations collection conceived at the outset was very different to the actual outcome of the project.

In addition to openness and flexibility, collaboration requires real commitment from philanthropists. Originally, the Foundation pledged support of \$100,000 a year for three years towards the project, but when COVID struck a lot of the initial decisions had to be changed. The project was extended for another year to make up for lost time. The Foundation extended its commitment to cover the fourth year to further support the project.



CASE STUDY The Balnaves Foundation and the Australian Museum Collaboration through capacity building

The Australian Museum has achieved considerable success through its recent Project Discover Campaign of \$12 million, driven CEO Kim McKay AO and the Board. Within it, we see an extraordinary example of collaboration between donors and leaders across the organisation that led to The Balnaves Foundation's support of the Museum's Indigenous-led exhibition, Unsettled.

Unsettled addresses the impacts of Captain Cook's arrival and his ongoing colonial legacy to tell the truth about Australia's foundations. In 2021, The Balnaves Foundation committed \$300,000 over three years to facilitate free entry to this and other First Nations exhibitions. Unsettled was viewed by more than 70,000 visitors during its run at the Museum and continues to draw audiences online. As Laura McBride, Director, First Nations, says, "Neil Balnaves AO essentially funded the largest scale truth telling exhibition the country's ever seen."

The Museum connected with The Balnaves Foundation specifically on this project because it self-identifies as funding First Nations projects. It was clear from the outset that there was a strong alignment of values between The Balnaves Foundation and Lara McBride and the Museum. As Hamish Balnaves, CEO of The Balnaves Foundation says, "The theft of land, massacres, institutional racism, and discrimination towards the First Peoples of this nation since 1788 and the resulting disadvantage; is still not widely known, understood, or acknowledged. Meaningful and effective reconciliation comes from truth telling, and that is why supporting exhibitions such as Unsettled are essential."

By building on these shared values and openly sharing the detailed plans for the exhibition, Laura

accelerated the trust built with The Balnaves Foundation. While The Balnaves Foundation's gift funded entry to the exhibition, the funding is fundamentally a commitment to backing Laura and her vision for First Nations at the Museum. This investment in people is what is really needed to drive a vibrant and sustainable arts sector and particularly, in First Nations projects, where capacity building is essential. As Hamish says, "After our initial meeting with Laura it was abundantly clear that this was an exhibition the Foundation needed to support. Laura's vision for Unsettled, her commitment to telling hard truths combined with the comprehensive community consultation and engagement, gave us great confidence in the exhibition. We also recognised that Laura had the unequivocal support of the Australian Museum's leadership team in delivering a ground-breaking exhibition. My initial reaction when walking into Unsettled for the first time was one of awe and inspiration and the Foundation is thrilled at its success and the significant impact it has had."

"We need to think about how we convince philanthropists that investment into staffing, although not sexy, has a huge impact socioeconomically for First Nations peoples... Investing in an aboriginal person will last their whole entire life." - Laura McBride

Laura and the Museum's vision for a permanent exhibition space and cultural research centre is incredibly exciting for the Museum and the Australian public. Ultimately, it will only be realised through continued investment in First Nations people, and the Australian Museum to continue to lead this work.



# **HOW DO YOU MAKE COLLABORATION MEANINGFUL?**

Meaningful and impactful collaboration in philanthropy and fundraising is more difficult to define than vision and leadership because it is fundamentally informed by the stakeholders and communities involved and the end objective.

It could mean seeking out leaders within the organisation with a compelling vision and connecting them with donors who share that vision. It could mean sharing information with donors that is nuanced and sensitive to build trust. It could mean working within a level of ambiguity.

For philanthropists, collaboration could mean a sustained commitment to a partnership, constantly seeking to learn and be curious, doing the research and being led by the needs of the organisation/community. As Johanna Featherstone says, "It is important to be curious, willing to learn and respectful of people's time. Time is the precious resource we all bring to the table. It is important that philanthropists don't expect collaborators to be continually educating them. We need to do the research too, while also being open to listening."

We can learn from observing different models for collaboration. However, more open discussion and storytelling about what collaboration looks like among fundraisers, Board members, leaders and philanthropists will help everyone understand their role in helping to facilitate collaboration in philanthropy and fundraising.

### CASE STUDY **First Nations Futures** A model for sharing power with First Nations communities

An important part of collaboration, particularly within the context of partnerships with First Nations communities, is sharing power so that projects can be First Nations led.

Launching in March 2023, First Nations Futures is a philanthropic or wealth redistribution platform that allows Australians to "co-invest" in First Nations organisations and initiatives, half of which are in the arts and culture space. It is a new model for what sharing power can look like in terms of philanthropy for First Nations arts and culture. Donations are distributed equally across all the partner organisations.

The model is predicated on a significant rethinking of how power is shared in terms of repositioning First Nations people at the centre of the relationship. As Co-Founder, Rona Glynn-McDonald explains "Collaboration is often framed as for the people in power who hold the resources or who have the privilege. There's an invitation for collaborators, whether that's people in the arts and culture community or First Nations people, to come to their table and have the conversation. But we need to be talking about how we can step out of our own tables and join those tables and those ecosystems that sit outside our proximity and listen and collaborate and operate in ways where we're wanting to hold relationship in. Whether it's a First Nation space or an arts and culture space, rather than trying to bring the relationships to us."

First Nations "intermediaries" like First Nation Futures will play an increasingly significant role in driving more philanthropic investment into First Nations arts and culture. In shifting the relationship dynamic and providing a mechanism for philanthropists to actively back First Nations communities, the platform ensures that the projects are First Nations led and empowers First Nations communities to drive solutions for themselves. As Rona says, "To determine what the future looks like on our own terms, on our own lands, and creating that space of ongoing investment".

"I think that non-indigenous people and philanthropists know that there is an obligation and a responsibility to be doing this well. And a lot of people just don't know where to start. So the role of First Nations intermediaries and First Nations led philanthropy is going to become in hot demand within the next five, ten years". - Rona Glynn-McDonald

In 2023, the year Australia will have a referendum on the Voice to Parliament, First Nations collaboration and leadership is particularly relevant. The arts has an opportunity to engage and inform what best practice collaboration can look like.



# **THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND SECTOR BODIES**

In light of strengthened government support for the arts and the new National Cultural Policy, it is worth considering the role of Government in driving philanthropic investment in the arts.

The traditional model of partnership between arts organisations and government is predicated on government agreeing to fund \$x if the organisation raises \$y. Notable examples include Sydney Modern where NSW State Government contributed \$244 million and Art Gallery of NSW raised \$100 million and the State Library of Victoria Vision 2020 Campaign where \$60.4 million came from the Victorian Government, with the remaining \$27.7 million raised by the State Library. There is immense appetite from the philanthropic sector in engaging in these partnerships. However, what other, more nuanced roles can government play? And how can government help with the challenges felt by the sector around a lack of time, fundraising skills and confidence of arts leaders and Boards?

We posed these questions to Creative Partnerships Australia, and Australia Council for the Arts and through their responses gained a sense that the new arts policy brings an energy and willingness to re-examine the interplay between government and philanthropy and enormous opportunity for collaboration between them.

As Dr Georgie McClean, Executive Director, Development and Strategic Partnerships, Australia Council for the Arts says, "We now have this policy opportunity with the platform of the national cultural policy, which really calls for greater collaboration between different parts of the sector, new forms of co-investment in culture, but also a sense of co-responsibility for culture across government, but also across a range of other sectors".



Some of the ways government can drive philanthropy in the arts include:



**VISION:** Advocating for the arts as a funding priority for philanthropists, particularly among the younger generation for whom the arts may be less important than other competing priorities. As Dan Rosen, Board Director, Creative Partnerships Australia, says "Sector bodies have a role in telling the story about why philanthropy in arts is so important and why the arts is such an important part of society".



**LEADERSHIP:** Promoting the importance of Board engagement in fundraising, particularly in the context of Government appointed arts boards, as Fiona Menzies, CEO, Creative Partnerships Australia, says, "the minister needs to explicitly say this organization needs to fundraise to survive and you need to be part of that." And, capacity building at scale for arts organisations leadership, including Board and Executive.



**COLLABORATION:** Facilitating new models of partnership in response to the shift from traditional philanthropy towards a new form of engaged philanthropy where philanthropists want to play a more active role in the solution, as Dr Georgie McClean says, "our role is to help develop those new approaches and partner with philanthropy and with the market, potentially through forms of social enterprise or social value investment, to enable more sustainable models in which philanthropy plays a part, either as a supporter or co-investor, to generate better social outcomes through the arts".

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Across the three themes explored in this paper, vision, leadership and collaboration, key recommendations identified include:

- Articulate a bold and compelling vision for your organisation and the role philanthropy can play in fulfilling that vision and share the vision boldly and broadly.
- Confidently step into the leadership your organisation needs, whether as Board member, Executive, fundraiser or philanthropist and work together to create a collective leadership model to achieve the organisation's vision for impact.
- Board members actively engage in fundraising by committing to100% giving participation to the organisation and where possible, making significant philanthropic gifts, advocating on behalf of the organisation to peers and philanthropists, leveraging government funding and embedding a culture of philanthropy in the organisation.
- **Executives** commit time and strategic prioritisation to fundraising activities, including vision articulation, donor engagement and embedding a culture of philanthropy in the organisation.

- Fundraisers demonstrate high levels of strategic thinking; exceptionally high levels of emotional intelligence; and effectively manage up, persuade and steward a coalition of stakeholders to achieve end goals. No longer purely operational or tactical, the role of the Fundraiser is now to influence the organisation as a whole.
- Philanthropists self-nominate your interests and fundraising priorities, seek out organisations that are aligned on values, be flexible and open and allow solutions to be led by the stakeholders affected by the issues.
- Build your skills and confidence to engage in fundraising, including through Noble Ambition's online fundraising and philanthropy course, knowledge resources and podcasts or by getting in touch with us for bespoke consulting and coaching.

# **A FINAL NOTE**

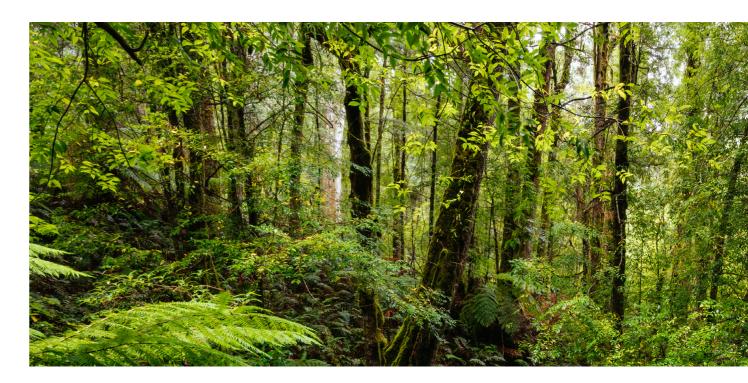
The arts and cultural sector is full of extraordinary fundraising stories that can inspire action across the for-purpose sector. This paper recognises and celebrates those stories of success and seeks to distil the best practice principles that sit behind them around three themes; vision, leadership and collaboration. By providing practical insights and case studies from organisations - big, small, metropolitan and regional who are leading in this space, we hope to equip arts and cultural leaders and fundraisers with the skills and confidence to drive greater philanthropic investment into the sector.

If the stories we have already seen are any indicator of what is to come, there is so much potential. Imagine what is possible into the future with bold vision, great leadership, and meaningful collaboration. People have the capacity to demonstrate these in a variety of different roles, and often, it begins with a conversation. We implore you to continue sharing stories of great fundraising leadership so that philanthropy can continue to drive a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable arts and cultural sector now, and for many years to come.

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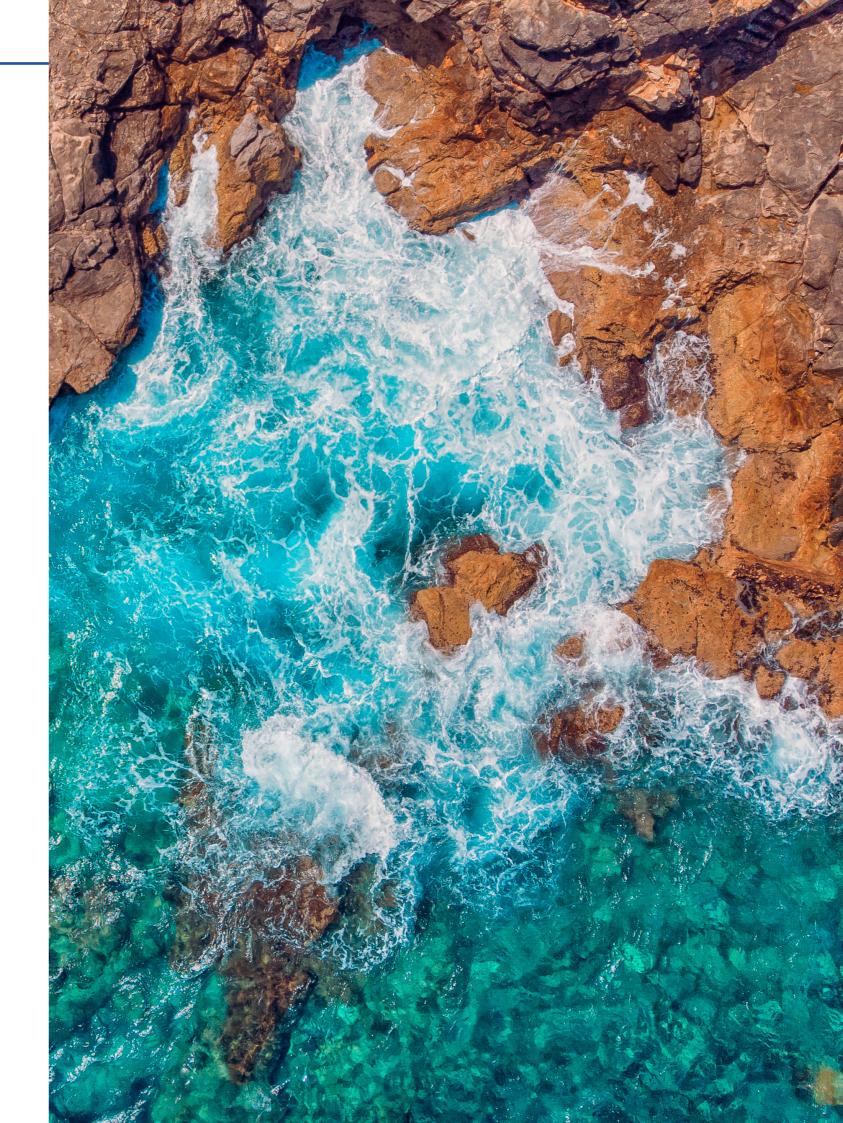
Noble Ambition acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present, and emerging. We also accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart to walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

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