



Budget 2022 Government Submission

When we consider the upcoming budget for 2022, Centre for Stories acknowledges that our values guide our considerations, especially in serving Australian citizens through governmental support for specific programs. We also do so from the sectors we work within - arts and social impact - while engaging a variety of governmental concerns and agencies as outlined below.

Established in 2015, Centre for Stories is a West Australian non-profit focused on stories. We train people how to tell stories, host events and publish work, all with an emphasis on under-represented voices. That includes elderly people, people from regional Western Australia, youth, LGBTQIA+ people, refugees and asylum seekers, First Nations, and others who find the arts inaccessible or without impact.

We have paid 800 creatives, hosted 550 events, produced 420 stories, trained over 250 storytellers, mentored 70 writers, held 13 festivals, entertained live audiences of 22,000, and had 90 media mentions,. One project in 2021 saw demonstrated increases of 14% in community connection, 12% in problem solving, and 12% in communication skills. This social impact distinguishes us from many other arts organisations and supports active forms of citizenship and wellbeing across Western Australia.

Centre for Stories works on many governmental issues, including the arts, human rights, foreign affairs, immigration and multiculturalism, local government, regional communication and development, and the prevention of domestic violence. We also offer job services through story-training from school children to executives, engaging with youth and international development from Karratha to Perth to Jakarta to Mumbai.

We have partnered with local, state, and Commonwealth governmental bodies. This includes City of Armadale, City of Bayswater, City of Mandurah, the State Library of Western Australia, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (WA), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia-Indonesia Council, and Australia Council. Since 2020, we have returned an estimated \$180,000 back to government in the form of taxes, including GST and income tax.

Our submission advocates for the small-to-medium arts and social impact sectors. While we think of those as disparate sectors, they nevertheless have a lot in common, especially with small business and non-profit in general. The arts often relies on substantial government funding just as social impact does in its initial start-up phase. No doubt there will be other submissions, especially from the arts after COVID, who call for increases to Australia Council and other funding. We support those, but also seek other budgetary mechanisms to improve investment, create non-profit and private collaboration, and promote financial opportunity into the future.

We seek allocated funding for the small-to-medium sector in smaller states, especially for innovative and inclusive programming, and relative to the GST revenue allocated. That means specific and targeted support beyond major companies such as opera and symphony orchestras that tend to be located in Sydney and Melbourne. This speaks to ongoing regional funding opportunities, especially for the states of Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, and the ACT and NT.

We seek a national 'StoryBank' similar to ArtBank to act as an archive and hub for stories that can then be shared through national government mechanisms to promote a sense of Australian identity, place-making, and ongoing and active citizenship. That would also rely on emphasising the role of stories from local governments to Commonwealth buildings to foreign embassies. We seek this as a new opportunity beyond the literary even as it also plays with narrative, language, and publication.

We seek funding across the different governmental sectors to knit together multiculturalism with regional development; local government with foreign affairs; and the prevention of domestic violence with job services. That means there must be a place for arts and social impact beyond Commonwealth agencies alone and within Prime Minister and Cabinet, which means targeted budgetary allocations that offer new funding for innovative organisations working across both with demonstrated results.

For the Budget in 2022, Centre for Stories seeks financial support for values aligned organisations and sectors. That means the arts and social impact beyond the traditional expectations of creative excellence and private resources. We hope there are subsidies to the small-to-medium sector as well as other levers and resources to be made available. This is in order to help Australia create opportunities that have hitherto been denied for marginalised groups, and all towards building good lives for those who need it most.