

alyo



Strategic Plan
2024 - 2029

Introduction

For 75 years, the Australian Youth Orchestra has played an integral role in developing Australia's finest musicians, thinkers and cultural leaders. AYO has continued to set and exceed the standard for musical excellence and to inspire generations of Australians with a lifelong passion for orchestral music making.

The AYO holds an iconic position in the Australian arts ecosystem. Thousands of alumni from the AYO programs not only fill the stages of the world's professional orchestral ensembles, but also fill leadership positions across all industries and sectors. The success of the AYO is because first and foremost we are about young Australians. We are proud of the humanity, compassion, courage and excellence of our young people. These are values that we celebrate, but also aspire to through our art and through our practice.

**We don't just develop orchestras
– we develop great young Australians.**

Who We Are

AYO is Australia's national representative youth orchestra. It is not only the best youth orchestra in Australia; it is also the best non-professional Australian orchestra.

What We Do

Through AYO's suite of world-class orchestral training programs, AYO:

- Performs
- Educates
- Develops people and communities
- Builds cultural capital
- Represents Australia



Acknowledgment of Country

Australian Youth Orchestra acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we come together as individuals and as a community.


We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, and celebrate the diversity of First Nations peoples. We recognise and respect their enduring connection to Country.

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“The AYO is so much more than just a youth orchestra; throughout my teenage years, AYO fostered my love of music-making and of listening in all its forms, through its additional emphasis on chamber music, creating vital industry connections with leading artists, and even providing an accessible pathway into my current casual positions with both the Melbourne and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras.”

— Charlotte Miles, cello



“AYO offers inspiration to the next generation of the world’s musicians, allows participants to achieve heights of performance we could never dream of reaching by ourselves, celebrates the hard work and passion of young musicians, and creates an atmosphere of pure exhilaration onstage that spills out into the audience. It’s the AYO magic.”

— Emma Amery, violin/viola

Vision, Purpose and Values

Vision

That all young Australians are empowered with musical knowledge, imagination and a love of music.

Purpose

To train, empower and inspire young musicians as Australia's leaders, thinkers and artists, through music education and performance experiences of the highest standards.

Values

Quality: We are committed to the highest level of artistic, educational and organisational practice.

Respect: We engage a youth-centred approach to all aspect of our organisation, that reflects our broader belief that all people should be treated with dignity and respect.

Creativity: • We celebrate the joy, wonder and discovery inherent in music making, and seek opportunities to excite human creativity through music.

Connection: We believe in the positive impact of working together to create something greater than the sum of its parts. We foster inclusivity, collaboration and belonging.

Where Are We Going (2024-2026)

As we look forward to the next three years of the Australian Youth Orchestra:

- We acknowledge that the voice of our young person increasingly seeks to be heard, to be represented and to have impact. This will be the guiding principle of our artistic and educational strategy.
- As Australia's pre-eminent orchestral training organisation, the AYO continues to play a vital and unique role in developing, providing the launchpad and holding custodianship of Australia's artistic and cultural future. An artistic future that is undisputed in excellence and rich in diversity.
- As our communities and young people grow and change, AYO will be agile and flexible, seeking ways to actively evolve ensuring relevance to our communities.
- AYO will amplify Australia's cultural reputation and voice on the global stage.
- Through developing Australia's future leaders, AYO will assume a leadership role in the evolution of the Australian classical music sector.

Our Impact

AYO's impact is not confined to the individual musicians who constitute the orchestras. Our impact extends to the artists & composers we work with, our families, our audiences, the education and arts sectors and more broadly, the Australian community. We develop the next generation of professional musicians AND we also develop leaders of adjacent industries who understand the value of the arts in fostering innovation, well-being and empathy.

- We set the standard of national excellence.
- We extend orchestral music as an artform.
- We lead and change the perception of what an Australian orchestra can be, and in turn the Australian classical musician.
- We celebrate the Australian sound and story in all its rich diversity.
- We lead by example, believing that music education is the right of every child.
- We develop Australian skill and talent regardless of background and resources.
- We create future leaders who understand and value intrinsic and extrinsic worth of the arts.
- We build Australia's cultural capital by developing artists and inspiring audiences.



Our Future

We place the young person at the centre of everything that we do. In 2024 and beyond AYO recognises that the young person seeks to be heard, to be represented and to have impact. With this in mind, our strategy is formed through the lens of three pillars as it pertains to young people:

AYO offers a real sense of community to young musicians. I have made so many amazing friends and met so many wonderful people through my participation in AYO. Coming from a smaller city like Hobart, this was pivotal for me, because it made me realise that there were more people like me who all shared a love of the same thing. I think the passion for music that AYO fosters is so important for the future of classical music in Australia. – Tasman Compton, bassoon

The 3 themes of **Voice, Diversity and Impact** are threaded throughout our strategic initiatives.

Youth Voice

AYO's essential purpose is to educate and develop young artists. To do this authentically and with relevance, the young person's needs must not only be at the centre of AYO's strategy, but also their voice. AYO believes in making decisions *with* young people rather than *for* young people. In 2024, AYO programs will move towards empowering young people to sit alongside and have active agency in their artform and art creation.

Empowering their voice, being led by young people and their areas of interest that expand beyond music to other and interconnected important issues for Australia, will enable cultural discussions that explore other issues such as environment & sustainability. AYO will be richer and stronger as we increasingly listen to the voices of the young people that we are serving, in an authentic way.

Diversity/Equity and Inclusion

AYO is committed to being an organisation that is culturally safe for people from different backgrounds. Further to this, AYO is uniquely placed to demonstrate leadership to the contemporary art music sector, to be bold and to truly listen to the diverse voices of our community, integrating them into every level of our organisation. Those levels span the grassroots pathways of Music in Me through to operational and governance systems, to the representation of the artistic peak on the concert stage and podiums of our flagship orchestra.

Impact

AYO knows that active engagement in music is immensely beneficial to the health, well-being and development of both communities and individual young people. As our National Cultural Policy seeks to reposition arts, culture and heritage as central to Australia's future, AYO also acknowledges the responsibility to lead and contribute through:

- impactful research, data collection and evaluation;
- advocacy and thought leadership; and
- open sharing of resources, learnings and dialogue with the sector and the community



Strategy 2024

- Goal 1** To enhance and foster the comprehensive growth of young Australians through top-tier and innovative music education, nurturing their musical talents alongside personal development and skill acquisition.
- Goal 2** Empower and engage young people to play a central role in shaping our artistic vision and driving the development and growth of our sector.
- Goal 3** To maintain a strong revenue base, continuously enhance our operational procedures and cultivate an exceptional workplace culture at AYO.
- Goal 4** To strengthen our capacity to lead, build and maintain productive relationships and partnerships within both the national and international orchestral ecosystem, benefitting young musicians, music educators and Australia's orchestras.
- Goal 5** To ensure effective and transparent governance practices that promote accountability and long-term success.

AYO's Federal Purpose

AYO is committed to realising the National Cultural Policy 'Revive', understanding that the five key pillars of First Nations, Centrality of the Artist, A Place For Every Story, Reaching Audiences and Strong Institutions are core to our calling – 'to deliver elite training in orchestral music and ensure access to training for talented Australians who aspire to national and international careers in the performing arts'.

Focused into 4 areas of **(1) Education and Vocational Training, (2) Engagement & Partnerships, (3) Operations & Sustainability, and (4) Governance**, AYO's objectives as agreed to by our principal funding partner The Commonwealth of Australia (2023-2029) are:

1. Deliver world-class education & training
2. Create and maintain best possible environment for learning & training
3. Attract and retain the best students
4. Govern and manage effectively
5. Engage and retain highly qualified staff
6. Grow our resources
7. Establish productive partnerships
8. Promote our work
9. Engage the community
10. Share ideas, resources and create opportunities for cooperative activities



Strategic Priorities and Goals

Strategic Priority 1. Education and Vocational Training

Goal 1

To enhance and foster the comprehensive growth of young Australians through top-tier and innovative music education, nurturing their musical talents alongside personal development and skill acquisition.

Goal 2

Empower and engage young people to play a central role in shaping our artistic vision and driving the development and growth of our sector.

Key Strategies

- Quality and Relevance of Programs:** AYO is committed to upholding the highest standards in artistic and instrumental training, while boldly embracing a forward-looking approach. We will continue to improve and use an iterative design and review process that ensures AYO programs maintain quality, relevance and artistic integrity. As part of this process, AYO will engage the highest quality musical mentors, leaders and teachers across all programs.
- Artistic Leadership:** We will proactively transition our core training programs to incorporate a dedicated focus on cultivating **Artistic Leadership** skills, encompassing areas such as curation, entrepreneurship, and leadership soft skills. The focus being to develop complementary skills, qualities and ways of thinking that will ensure resilient and thriving musicians and cultural leaders for a constantly changing future.
- Holistic Development:** Simultaneously, we will prioritize the development and **well-being** of young individuals, especially within the realm of elite performance, by integrating it as an essential component of all core training programs. This will involve an explicit learning plan/curriculum as well as elements of whole company staff training.
- Music Classroom:** Continue to expand and implement the Music in Me Program so every child has the opportunity to access quality music education in the classroom across remote, regional, and metropolitan Australia.

Key Strategies

- Increasing Youth Agency:** AYO will actively seek to ensure artistic and social relevance by integrating the **youth voice** into the evaluation, design and decision making of the organisation through a targeted advisory body.
- Diversity and Collaboration:** Diversify artistic experiences by increasing collaborations and partnerships with other art forms, orchestras, festivals and educational institutions

Success Indicators

- AYO will be recognised as a leading organisation for artistic quality, innovation and educational impact/value.
- Artistic and program evaluation framework demonstrates high level of quality, diversity and participant engagement.
- Development and implementation of Well-being curriculum and Artistic Leadership programs over 3 years.
- AYO core programs will increase application numbers and maintain geographic spread across 3 years.
- Our alumni will increasingly be recognised and acknowledged as leaders across a range of professional sectors.
- The AYO Youth Advisory Committee will be actively engaged and productively involved throughout the organisation.
- The Music in Me footprint will grow, increasing our reach into Australian schools, including regional schools.

Strategic Priorities and Goals

Strategic Priority 2. Operations and Sustainability

Goal 3

To maintain a strong revenue base, continuously enhance our operational procedures and cultivate an exceptional workplace culture at AYO.

Key Strategies

1. Maintain sound financial practices, ensuring well costed business cases are developed for new programs and spending is in line with budgets.
2. Enhance the robustness of our fundraising strategy and objectives by cultivating distinct stakeholder engagement plans to broaden our financial support base.
3. Invest in improved systems and processes that meet staff and participants' needs, improve organisational efficiency and increase effectiveness.
4. Create a safe and healthy workplace through regular internal reflection and external benchmarking with industry peers, to observe best workplace practices.
5. Value workforce diversity and strive for excellence in staff recruitment, supervision, support and development.

Success Indicators

- Programs delivered in accordance with approved budget and monitored to ensure efficient and responsible fiscal management.
- Fundraising targets are met through effective donor stewardship.
- Implementation of accounting software and increased use of Salesforce capacity. Increased use of data to inform program decisions, communicate narrative and improve internal processes. AYO systems can accommodate future growth, increased demand and changing contexts/needs comfortably and effectively.
- Enhanced employee retention and talent acquisition.
- Increased number of AYO staff taking advantage of development opportunities and growth/satisfaction indicators.

Strategic Priority 3. Engagement and Partnership

Goal 4

To strengthen our capacity to lead, build and maintain productive relationships and partnerships within both the national and international orchestral ecosystem, benefitting young musicians, music educators and Australia's orchestras.

Key Strategies

1. Re-engage with or deepen existing relationships with all state professional and youth orchestras.
2. Cultivate partnerships with cultural organisations, festivals, and venues to increase performance opportunities both locally and internationally
3. Strengthen relationships with alumni and encourage their involvement in mentoring; engaging with and supporting current participants.
4. We will invest in both systems and staff skill development to enhance our ability to effectively engage with our participants and alumni in the digital sphere, utilising digital platforms and social media to enhance engagement with a wider audience and broadening performance/ learning experiences.
5. **First Nations:** Engage in an open learning dialogue with First Nations artists that seeks to learn from and gives access to First Nations artists.

Success Indicators

- Retuned Orchestral Fellowships that fit as a continuum with professional orchestras' emerging artist programs.
- Open sharing of resources such as audition processes and programming content with orchestral partners.
- AYO is annually invited to perform at classical music festivals.
- Alumni community reunion opportunity that celebrates the impact of active engagement with music making.
- Learning Management System designed and implemented for the Music in Me program.
- Reconciliation Action Plan implementation, with focus on access and engagement of First Nations education advisor for the Music in Me Program.

Strategic Priorities and Goals

Strategic Priority 4. Governance

Goal 5

To ensure effective and transparent governance practices that promote accountability and long-term success.

Key Strategies

1. Review and update the organisation's governance structure and policies to align with best practices and legal requirements.
2. Foster diversity and inclusion within the board and leadership positions to reflect the community's demographics.
3. Maintain an effective and engaged national board.
4. Develop succession plans for key office bearers.
5. Sustain a culture of probity, accountability and compliance.

Success Indicators

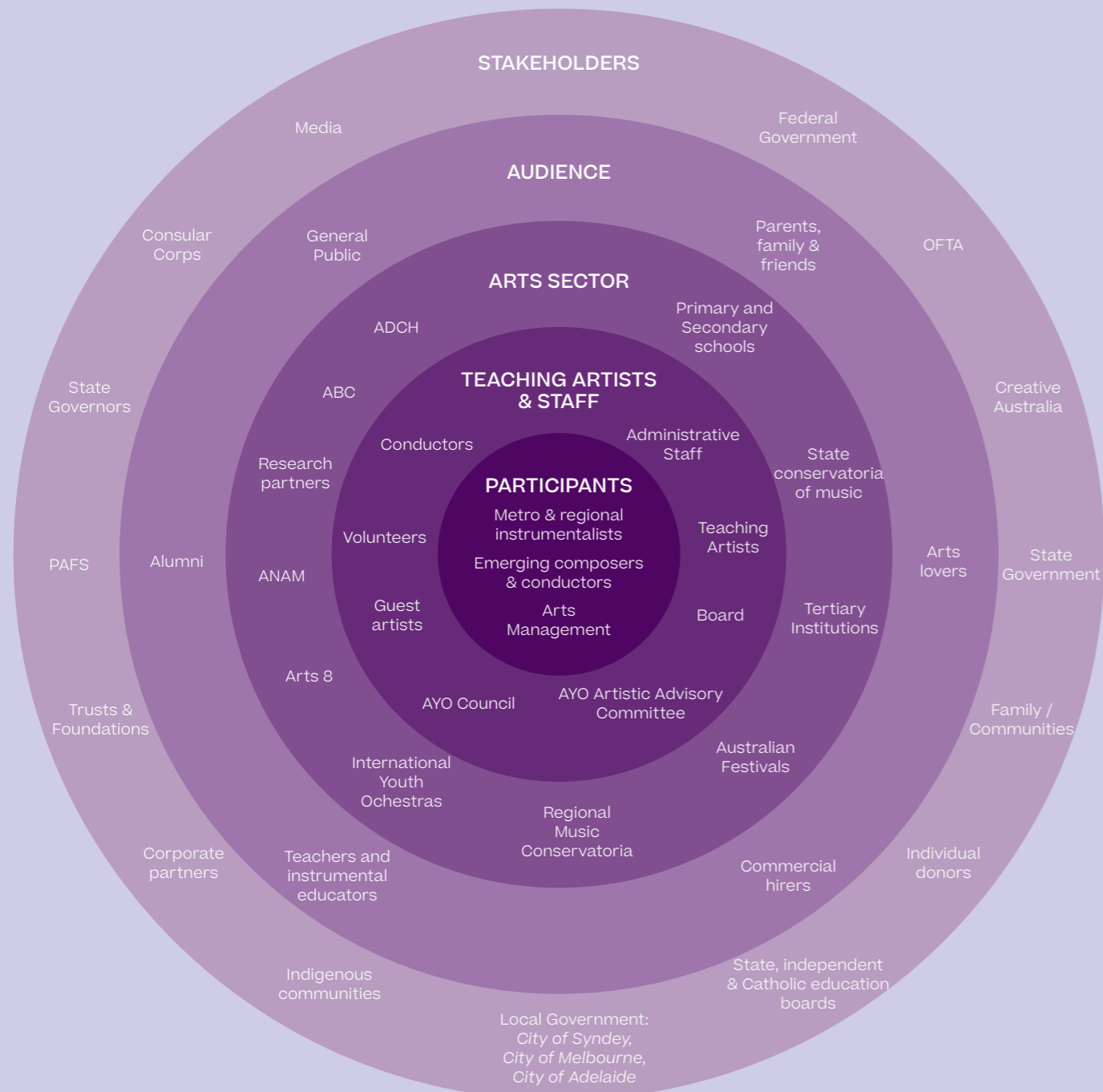
- All organisational policies are compliant with relevant laws and regulations.
- Composition of Board and Advisory Committees reflect the diversity of the community, including aspects such as gender, ethnicity, age, and other relevant demographics.
- High level of Board engagement in committee work, fundraising efforts and strategic planning.
- Regular self-assessment of leadership competencies and subsequent addressing of any skill gaps.
- Demonstration of a culture that promotes ethical behaviour, with high levels of transparency in financial reporting, governance and other associated decision-making.



Market and Stakeholders

Market

The Australian Youth Orchestra speaks to a range of different market segments, providing each with different value propositions. Our market segment map details the many stakeholders we engage with. At the core are our participants, from whom everything else flows.



AYO’s marketing strategy is constructed around inbound (content and communications strategy) and outbound strategies (social media & public relations strategies).

Our central purpose is to celebrate the young Australian elite musician, tell their story and to generate national awareness & public pride. The central call-to-action will be in support of these young musicians and the positive, vital impact that music has in our communities.

AYO’s unique value proposition:

- Australia’s best young musicians (nationwide)
- International engagement (international artists, professional pathways and performance opportunities).
- Reputation for excellence – national benchmark or performance and education standards.
- World-class performance venues & experiences.
- History and reputation of professional placement – our alumni are Australia’s current leaders.
- The transformative nature of the intensive, short-course, residential programs.
- Empowering educators with best practice in music education/professional learning

Stakeholder Value Proposition

Stakeholder	What do we offer	Value Proposition: commentary
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformative experiences, developing life and leadership skills. Exceptional training and performance opportunities. Orchestral connections (national and international). Professional and career pathways into art music sector. Innovative 'art creation' experiences. Intensive/specialist residential courses. 	<p>AYO not only brings together the best musicians from around Australia, working with top tier artists/conductors at every program – but we can offer experiences that truly allow for the development of youth agency in the art music forum which is unique to Australia. No other competitor has the freedom or scope to do this for classical instrumentalists.</p>
Professional Musicians/ Artists/ Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Australia's best young orchestral musicians. Collaboration with colleagues from a national network. Impact – giving back to the future health of Australian Arts ecology. 	<p>Our teaching artists and performing artists are connected through their commitment to the development and belief in the excellence of young people and their music.</p>
Audience and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia's best non-professional symphony orchestra – national authority. Free or low- cost classical performances with a national footprint (regional and metro). 'Safe' and Educational Residential programs for their children : assurances of high level of duty of care. Access to Australia's best teachers. 	<p>AYO sets the standard for youth orchestras nationally and on the global stage. We have the opportunity to also set the standard for creativity in the orchestral artform. We offer networks and opportunities to families of elite musicians that have national and global depth.</p>
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to engage with the enriching form of orchestral music as an audience member or a supporter. Network of professional musicians and industry leaders. Impact on an elite young musician's life/career. 	<p>AYO has the opportunity to re-create the benefits for high level ensemble music making, in an intensive time & setting, with a national network of colleagues for alumni who have progressed into their adulthood. Models of this are found with Chorus OZ and professionally with AWO. The elite level of 'community orchestra' does not yet exist.</p>

Stakeholder	What do we offer	Value Proposition: commentary
Arts Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AYO is the pipeline organisation to Australia's professional orchestras, not only in terms of performing musicians, but also administrative and adjacent staff. Role model best practice for elite ensemble development/training. Contribute to the creation of Aust new works. Represent and reflect contemporary Australia. 	<p>AYO works with the best musicians from across the country.</p> <p>Graduates have had in depth skill & knowledge development with professional level experiences. High success rate in transitioning to professional context.</p> <p>Representation of Australian excellence – readily quantifiable.</p>
Private Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to have direct impact on the future starts of the Australian Art Music industry. Support music education at grassroots level in the music classroom. Support musicians and activity that is local, national and international. Commission new works that have deep impact on sector (repeat performances). 	<p>Excellence, youth, innovation and ongoing impact.</p>
Federal Government: Principle Funding Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AYO is a perfect vehicle for the government to implement its arts and culture vision. We specialise in the young musician space. We are also a champion of the nation, that is capable of maintaining and enhancing the good relationships between cultures within Australia and abroad from a performing arts perspective. Music is the common language across all of us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Nations First – able to embed cultural and artistic understanding in the development of Australia's future artists in a deep and meaningful way (e.g. Cultural residency program) A Place For Every story – Diversity is both our inputs and outputs. AYO reflects contemporary Australian art music and the musicians that make this art. An important vehicle for creating and disseminating these stories both nationally and internationally. Centrality of the Artist – we 'live' the young artist, embedding the centrality of the young artist in all aspects of organisation. We are instrumental in developing the skills, mindsets, experiences of the future creative. Strong Institutions Reaching Audiences – the only youth orchestra that has a national reach both in terms of participants and engagement with audiences in concert halls and schools/classroom.



Governance and Management

Our Board

Chair:	Mr. Ben Rimmer
Deputy Chair:	Prof. Scott Harrison
Treasurer:	Ms. Linda Fox

Ms Sally Basser	Ms Alison Beare
Ms Jessica Block	Mr Lachlan Bramble
Ms Karina Filipi	Dr Kate Hadwen
Mr Simon Johnson	Dr Andrew Lu AM
Ms Sandra Robertson	

Sub-committees

Artistic Advisory Committee

Chair: Mr. Lachlan Bramble
 Monica Curro
 Michelle Walsh
 Timothy Matthies
 Karina Filipi
 Shefali Pryor

Finance and Executive Committee

Chair: Mr. Ben Rimmer
 Ms Sally Basser
 Mr. Simon Johnson
 Ms Linda Fox
 Prof. Scott Harrison

Development Committee

Chair: Ms. Jessica Block
 Mr Simon Johnson
 Dr Andrew Lu AM
 Ms Sandra Robertson

Nominations Committee

Chair: Mr. Ben Rimmer
 Ms Sally Basser
 Mr. Simon Johnson
 Ms. Kimbali Harding, CEO

Youth Advisory Committee

AYO Young Artists Committee is a select group of young people, chaired by an elected member, who will be consulted on, and have input into, all aspects of the company including: artistic programming; operational decision-making and policy; identity and communications; and engagement strategy.

Succession

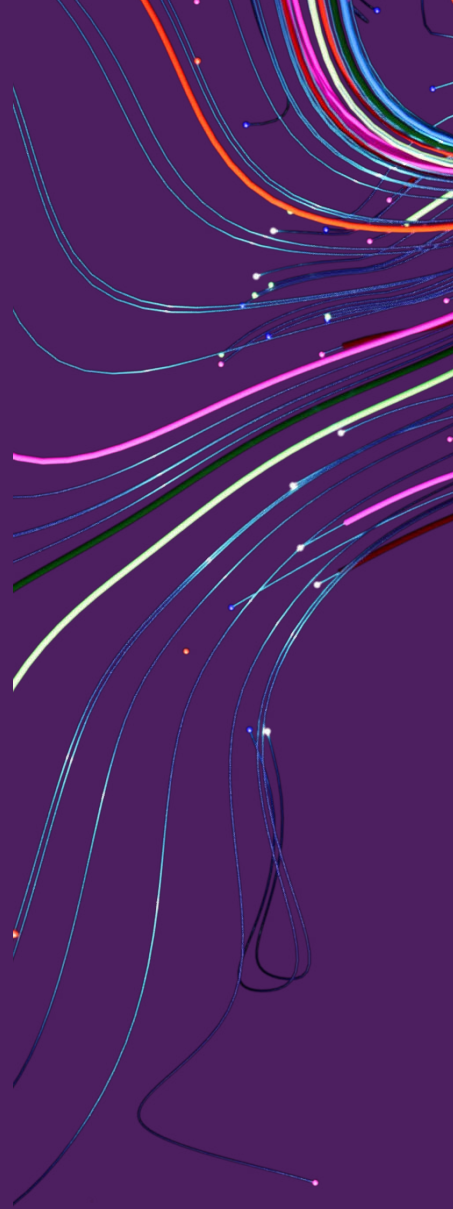
Effective succession planning is vital to the ongoing success of AYO. Through proactive initiatives, including training, mentorship and professional development opportunities, we aim to build a pipeline of capable leaders who can seamlessly assume key roles as needed.

Organisational Culture

At the core of our organisational purpose is a central focus on the young individual, complemented by our values of quality, respect, connection, and creativity. We are dedicated to fostering an environment where the younger generation is empowered, and our values serve

as guiding principles, ensuring a workplace that prioritizes excellence, collaboration, inclusivity, and innovation. Together, these elements define our commitment to both the individual and the overarching ethos that propels AYO into the future.





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