

Australian Chamber Orchestra Submission to State Significant Development Application for Walsh Bay Arts and Cultural Precinct

24 November 2017

1. About the Australian Chamber Orchestra

“the greatest chamber orchestra around today” The Guardian (UK), 2016

Founded in 1975, the Australian Chamber Orchestra is recognised as one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world. It is renowned for the integrity and excellence of its programming, and the loyalty and enthusiasm of its audiences and other supporters. A dedicated troupe of diverse musicians, under the inspiring direction of Artistic Director & Lead Violin, Richard Tognetti, the ACO performs all over the world, from red-dust regional centres of Australia to New York night clubs, from Australian capital cities to the world’s most prestigious concert halls, including New York’s Carnegie Hall, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, London’s Wigmore Hall and Vienna’s Musikverein. The ACO’s dedication and musicianship has created warm relationships with such celebrated soloists as Susan Graham, Emmanuel Pahud, Steven Isserlis, Dawn Upshaw, Joseph Tawadros, Pekka Kuusisto and Pieter Wispelwey. The ACO is renowned for collaborating with artists from diverse genres, including singers Tim Freedman, Neil Finn, Katie Noonan, Paul Casis, Meow Meow and Barry Humphries; visual artists Michael Leunig, Bill Henson, Shaun Tan and Jon Frank; and directors Neil Armfield and Nigel Jamieson. The ACO has recorded for the world’s top labels. Recent recordings have won three consecutive ARIA Awards and documentaries featuring the ACO have been shown on television worldwide and won awards at film festivals on four continents.

The ACO currently presents more than 85 concerts a year in venues all over Australia and attracts very high audience numbers year on year. The ACO has approximately 10,000 subscribers who purchase year-long season tickets every year and attracts many tens of thousands of single ticket buyers to its events. The ACO has collaborated successfully with such companies as the Sydney Dance Company, Sydney Festival, Synergy Percussion and Gondwana Choirs and has embraced new technologies, especially through the creation of ACO Virtual – an immersive, interactive digital installation of the ACO which has tours to regional and metropolitan centres all over Australia. The ACO’s broad reaching National Education Program reaches thousands of students in primary and secondary schools, tertiary music students and young professionals seeking experience to enter the profession, right across the country. An adult education series of pre-concert talks attracts thousands of members of the public keen to gain insight into the music played by the ACO.

2. Support for Create NSW’s Proposal for the Development of the Walsh Bay Arts and Cultural Precinct

The Australian Chamber Orchestra is highly supportive of Create NSW’s vision to create a sustainable and activated arts and culture precinct that supports and nurtures Sydney’s home-grown culture and creativity and Create NSW’s proposal to develop an integrated performing arts and cultural precinct within Walsh Bay and sees great potential in the Proposal’s capacity to expand and strengthen the existing cluster of cultural institutions and attractions along Sydney’s ‘Arts and

Cultural Ribbon' and complement the other cultural initiatives in surrounding areas, including those proposed at nearby Barangaroo.

As well as supporting Create NSW's overall proposal for the development of Walsh Bay Arts and Cultural Precinct, the ACO is particularly supportive of the proposed refurbishment and expansion of facilities within the existing structure of Pier 2/3.

The ACO is seeking a new home to enable it to meet the demand for its growing education and community engagement programs. A new home will enable the ACO to stage public performances and accommodate a public access program which will bring first class musical and educational experiences to people of all ages, ranging from primary school children, through secondary and tertiary levels, professional development and adult education. The proposed refurbishment and expansion of facilities within the existing structure of Pier 2/3 would enable the NSW Government and the ACO to create this home.

The ACO's home at Pier 2/3 will be built around a 300-seat flexible performance space with excellent acoustics, video projection, sound recording and editing facilities. Backstage areas will accommodate rehearsal and practice facilities, and a music and sound library, box-office and administration.

The year-long program at Pier 2/3 will include activities such as rehearsals and concerts by ACO musicians, ACO Collective (our mentoring and regional touring orchestra), ACO Academy (our national youth chamber orchestra), chamber concerts, solo recitals, open rehearsals, workshops, pre-concert talks, lectures and talks about music. The ACO's new home will also welcome a broad range of other arts and creative artists and organisations who will be encouraged to hire our spaces when they are not in use by the Orchestra.

The ACO's new home at Pier 2/3 will develop an international reputation for creativity, innovation and daring through the kind of programming which has become the ACO's hallmark. It will be a magnet for creative artists, aspiring young musicians and music-lovers.

