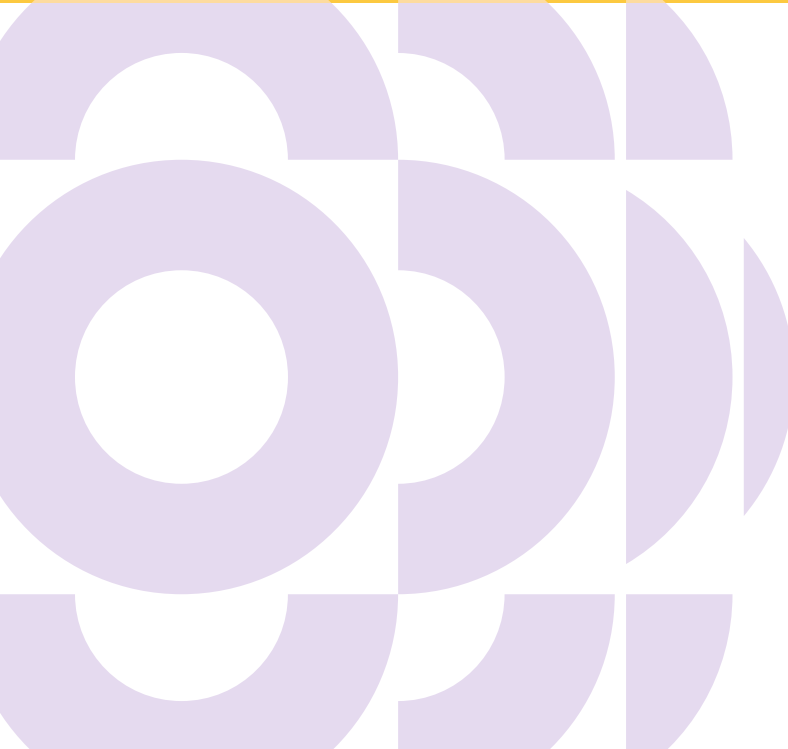




Northern Rivers
Conservatorium

Strategic Plan

2025 - 2028





NRC is strategically placed to contribute to the economic well-being and vibrant cultural life of the community it serves.

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The Northern Rivers Conservatorium acknowledges the people of the Bundjalung nation, traditional custodians and music makers of the land on which we work and come together in music.



About us



Our Profile

The Northern Rivers Conservatorium (NRC) is the largest single provider of quality music education in the Northern Rivers. Community-based music education and performance contributes significantly to human and social capital in regional communities. As a Regional Conservatorium, NRC is strategically placed to contribute to the economic well-being and vibrant cultural life of the community it serves. We do this in the following ways:

Community music education programs

The provision of music education and performance services to schools

Working to raise the profile of music in regional and rural communities

Employment of professional music educators and performers

Presentation of quality music performance for regional communities

Partnerships at the local, state and national level

Music education and the arts sector are vulnerable to changes in the political climate and government policy. NRC currently operates on 35.5% government funding and 64.5% fees for service and is particularly susceptible to economic conditions that affect rural and regional communities. As a not-for-profit organisation, NRC seeks to implement sustainable financial strategies for all operations.



Our Region

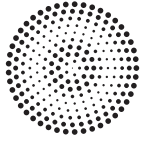
The Northern Rivers boasts the highest concentration of arts and creative industries practitioners living and working in a regional centre. This contributes significantly to the cultural, economic and social wellbeing of the community. The Northern Rivers Conservatorium serves communities spanning the local government areas of:

- Ballina
- Byron Bay
- Kyogle
- Lismore
- Richmond Valley*
- Tweed*

* Clarence Valley Conservatorium delivers services to the Clarence Valley and parts of Richmond Valley LGA. While NRC does not deliver weekly music tuition to students in the Tweed LGA, annual immersion events do attract a number of students from the Tweed and across the state.







Leadership Statements

“ The Northern Rivers Conservatorium has a proud history of music education in the region. Located in its 120 year old heritage building it has demonstrated its resilience by overcoming recent weather events. Recently, we have made significant progress in creating offerings to the indigenous community. The NRC has a vibrant and committed Board, teachers and staff.

Christopher Leach PSM
Chair



“ The Northern Rivers Conservatorium is proud to serve the beautiful and diverse community of the Northern Rivers region. The completion of the remediation and resilience works on our heritage building enables us to now look toward a future of consolidation, sustainability and expansion. With the exciting launch of our First Nations Music Program, so begins a deeply significant chapter in our organisation's history.

Anita Bellman
Executive Director



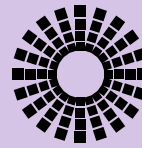


Strategic Plan 2025-2028



Vision

For the love of music.



Role

Providing quality music education and performance experiences for all.

This strategic plan directly supports and is aligned with
NRC's Vision, Role and Values



Values

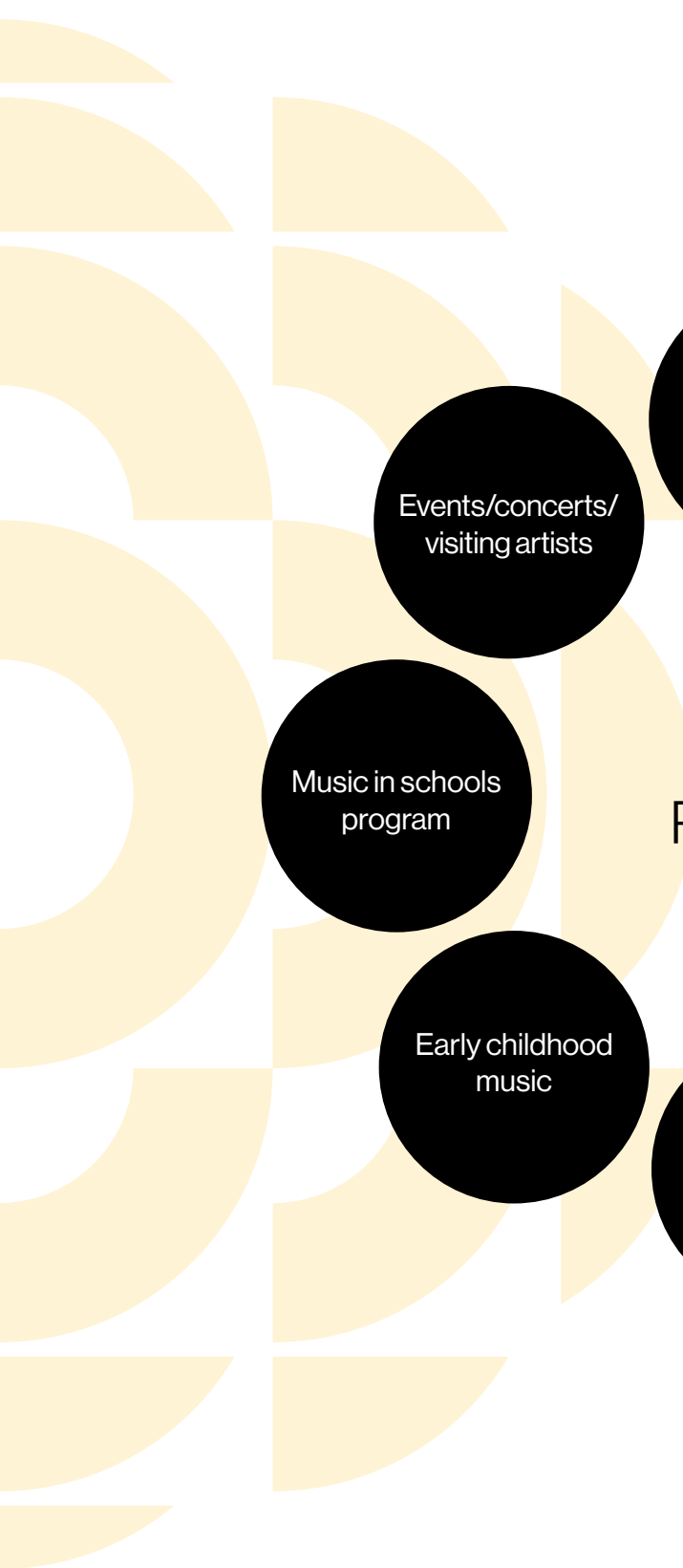
INCLUSIVE	A spirit of inclusion for all our community
INTEGRITY	In all that we do and say
COLLABORATION	We serve our community and collaborate with the local, wider national and global community of musicians
QUALITY	We provide quality music education and performance opportunities
OPTIMISM	We seek out the best in our students & staff and embrace possibilities and opportunities



Our Core Business

NRC's core business or reason for being is:

To provide a supportive
music education experience
that embraces diversity.



Current Programs

Events/concerts/
visiting artists

Community
music
program

Ensembles

Choirs

Music in schools
program

Early childhood
music

Individual
tuition

First Nations
music program





Desired future by 2028

The key characteristics and components that will define NRC by 2028



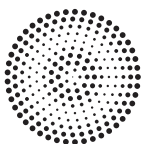
Community Hub for Music and Performance

Diverse range of music program offerings to individuals and groups from short beginner courses to advanced programs



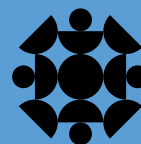
Embracing Technology

Using current and future technologies to enhance teaching at the Conservatorium



Schools Program

Providing music programs and performance experiences for schools across the Northern Rivers region including holiday programs



First Nations Program

Operational First Nations music department



Strategy Roadmap to 2028



The Strategic Road Map for NRC is founded on a clear appreciation of our current and future external environments.

Our response to those environments and the achievement of our Vision, Role, Values and Desired Future will be delivered through the achievement of seven Key Result Areas (KRAs).

NRC Board's success in achieving these KRAs will depend on the achievement of the associated strategic objectives. The KRAs will also provide the Executive Director and management with the authority and direction required.

Strategic
Intent



Focus on Resilience

NRC has a proven history of adapting to significant external pressures including global health crises, economic downturns and natural disasters. NRC will focus on the health, safety and welfare of its staff, students and stakeholders to ensure ongoing provision of music and performance programs to our community.

Our key performance indicators will be:

Committed stewardship of the NRC heritage building

Business Continuity Plan current and effective

Successful application for additional government grants to support restoration of music programs for the Northern Rivers community

Retention of experienced workforce



Strategic Objectives	Who / When
Seek expert support to ensure the heritage building is structurally sound and the interior is a safe working environment	Executive Director / Building Consultant 2025
Develop a building maintenance and improvement schedule with a focus on future flood mitigation	Executive Director / Building Consultant 2025
Re-develop our BCP to account for the likelihood of extreme weather events.	Executive Director / Board 2025
Maintain links with strategic partnerships developed during the 2022 flood crisis. eg Create NSW, SCU	Executive Director Ongoing
Monitor and regularly review the NRC Flood Response Plan	Executive Director / Admin Team 2025
Commission a mural for the wall adjacent to the lift shaft	Executive Director / Board 2027
Recompile the historic record for the Conservatorium building.	Executive Director / Heritage Consultant 2027



Broaden our Impact

NRC will strengthen our identity and increase engagement with our stakeholders, students and the wider community and be recognised as a 'community hub' for all.

Our key performance indicators will be:

Our students and their families are satisfied with the music experience of NRC

Student numbers meet and/or exceed agreed targets

Our teaching staff understand and work aligned to NRC's values

Strategic Objectives	Who / When
Review NRC brand 'The Brand Promise' (the characteristics and attributes of the brand)	Executive Director / Marketing Consultant Annually
Develop NRC Story/Narrative and key messages for both internal (our staff) and external stakeholders (the Northern Rivers community)	Executive Director / Marketing Consultant Annually
Develop, implement, monitor and annually review NRC's marketing and communication strategy with emphasis on brand awareness of NRC's 'For the love of music'	Executive Director / Marketing Consultant Annually
Revise and regularly update communication and marketing resources such as: • Website • Social Media • Brochures • Advertising • e-Newsletters • Program Fact Sheets	Executive Director / Graphic Designer / Admin Annually
Develop and implement an annual communication schedule including local: • Newspaper • Events • Radio • Open Days • Online • TV • Community Presentations	Executive Director / Comms Consultant / Admin Annually
Partner with key stakeholders for performance events	Executive Director & Admin Annually
Develop and implement an internal communication strategy to ensure staff understand and work aligned with NRC's brand promise and values, and act as 'ambassadors' for NRC.	Executive Director / Comms Consultant 2025
Make application for local and regional awards for recognition of our quality music programs and innovation partner projects	Executive Director Annually
Maintain student, staff and alumni profiles and their achievements to tell the story of NRC	Executive Director & Admin Annually

Develop our Regional Schools Program

NRC will partner with schools in the Northern Rivers Region to provide specialist music education programs and performance opportunities.

Our key performance indicators will be:

Number of schools in the region partnering with NRC

Number of students enrolled with NRC schools program

Cumulative results and trends from student, staff and school surveys

New school holiday programs established

Strategic Objectives	Who / When
Conduct research on the needs of school music programs in the Northern Rivers region	School Liaison / First Nations Project Officer 2025
Develop and implement a Regional School Strategy	School Liaison / Executive Director 2025
Achieve the key performance measures of the Regional Grants Program	ED / Teaching Staff / Admin Ongoing
Revise, update and annually review the process of engaging with schools to deliver music and performance programs; particularly regular meetings with Principals	School Liaison / Executive Director 2026
Ensure additional teaching staff are engaged to support NRC's school programs	School Liaison / Executive Director Ongoing
Develop and implement the school music programs	School Liaison / Ongoing
Continue existing and establish new school holiday music programs	School Liaison / First Nations Project Officer / Teachers Ongoing

Expand our Music Offerings

NRC will be the 'provider of choice' for music education and performance opportunities in the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

Our key performance indicators will be:

First Nations Music Program established and resourced

Cumulative results and trends of students and teachers satisfaction surveys

Increased participation in NRC music programs

Strategic Objectives	Who / When
Revise and update NRC learning framework	Executive Director / Schools Liaison / Teachers 2025
Establish the NRC First Nations Music Program with funding support	Executive Director / First Nations Project Officer 2026
Continue to research, pilot and implement music programs in agreed priority areas, e.g. • School holiday programs • Short introductory programs • Additional choirs • Instrumental programs • Music therapy	Executive Director / Schools Liaison / First Nations Project Officer/ Teachers Ongoing
Continue to promote and expand early childhood music program	Early Childhood Music Coordinator Ongoing
Take opportunities for community music programs and performance partnerships e.g. Aged Care and Disability providers	Executive Director / Schools Liaison / First Nations Project Officer / Teachers 2025
Expand offering of both face-to-face and online learning music programs.	Executive Director / Schools Liaison / First Nations Project Officer 2026
Develop and implement an annual schedule of the 'live gig guide' for NRC teachers performing in the community	Admin 2026 & ongoing

Focus on our Sustainability

Through the development of key financial indicators, robust monitoring of financial performance and sourcing additional revenue options, NRC will be a viable organisation able to invest in its future growth.

Our key performance indicators will be:

Cumulative results and trends of annual profit and loss, cash flow and balance sheet statements

NRC Education Fund established and attracting donors and sponsors

Respond to the changing nature of climate change in Lismore and surrounds.

Strategic Objectives	Who / When
Revise, update and regularly review NRC disaster management plan	ED / Board / Admin / Consultants Annually & as required
Develop and implement a Master Building and Asset Plan for the on-going maintenance of NRC building	Executive Director / Building Consultant 2025
Develop, implement and robustly monitor annual operation budgets incorporating agreed key financial indicators	Executive Director / Accountant / Board Ongoing
Develop, implement and annually review a three (3) year financial forecast ensuring NRC has the capacity to invest/fund its future strategic initiatives. Assess the viability of different financial and risk scenarios.	Executive Director / Accountant / Board Ongoing
Establish the NRC Education Fund and NRC Building Reserve	Board / Legal Consultant 2028
Develop and implement the NRC Fundraising strategy with the aim of ensuring alternative revenue streams with key corporate and community stakeholders through sponsorship of programs, events and donors	Executive Director / Board Ongoing
Identify Industry partners as part of the Fundraising strategy	Executive Director / Board Ongoing
Develop and implement NRC ICT strategy ensuring our IT platforms and infrastructure meet our needs	IT Support Co. 2025 & Ongoing



Engage with our Partners

NRC will continue to pursue productive partnerships with a range of key stakeholders to enhance the quality of our music programs and performance experience.

Our key performance indicators will be:

Documented agreements for key education, training and health providers

Cumulative trends and results from annual resident, families and staffing satisfaction surveys

Number and value of partnership agreements with NRC

Strategic Objectives	Who / When
Develop and implement the NRC Partnership strategy with the aim of: • Increased co-design and delivery of music programs • Maintaining relationships with the NSW Association of Regional Conservatoriums • Maintaining relationship with the NSW Department of Education • Expanding and growing partnerships locally, nationally and internationally	Executive Director / Management 2026
Participate in active cross-promotion, education and performance activities with music partners e.g. Northern Rivers Performing Arts (NORPA) and Musica Viva	Executive Director / Schools Liaison / First Nations Project Officer Ongoing
Increase the number of partnering arrangements with Northern River schools for delivery of school music programs	Schools Liaison Ongoing
Seek out performance and musicians nationally and internationally to work alongside teaching staff and students at NRC	Executive Director / Schools Liaison / First Nations Project Officer / Teachers Ongoing
Utilise and review consultative feedback processes/methods with partners	Executive Director / Schools Liaison 2025 & Ongoing
Develop and implement a sponsorship strategy	Executive Director / Board 2025



Develop our People

NRC will continue the development of our teaching and support staff in an environment of support, inclusion, collaboration and innovation delivery quality music education, performance opportunities and administration services

Our key performance indicators will be:

Cumulative results and trends of annual student and staff satisfaction surveys

Feedback from consultation processes

Enrolment targets met or exceeded

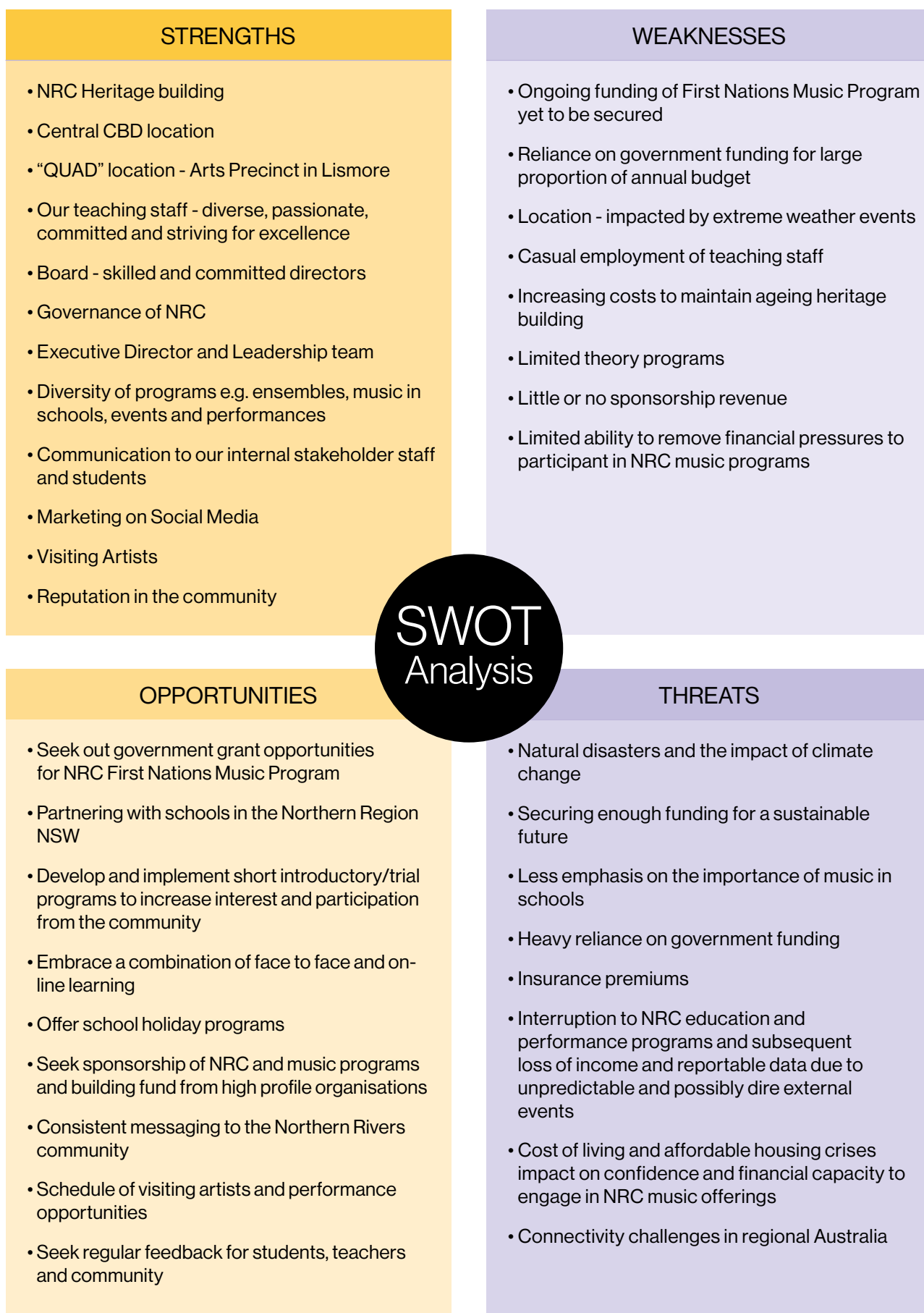
Results and trends of annual performance appraisals

Staff are satisfied with support from management

Staff recommend NRC to the Northern Rivers Community

Strategic Objectives	Who / When
Revise operational structure ensuring we have the right people in the right positions	Executive Director 2025
Develop and implement a future workforce strategy for the recruitment and retention of experienced teachers and musicians	Executive Director / Board 2026
Develop and implement an annual training and development plan for teaching and support staff	Executive Director / Schools Liason Ongoing
Schedule professional development workshops delivered by local and visiting experts	Executive Director / Schools Liason Ongoing
Regularly consult and engage with teachers and support staff on music program offerings, communication, processes and systems, and seek feedback	Executive Director / Schools Liason April & October Annually
Conduct a governance review/audit of the Board's skill mix, documented processes, practices and policies, and implement a governance improvement plan and Board succession strategy	Board Annually
Develop and implement a Director education program in areas such as governance, finance, fundraising, risk management and as requested by Board members	Board Annually







POLITICAL	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL
• Political system stable in Australia with short term election cycles (3-4 years) • Changes in global political landscape. • NSW government policy position on the future funding of regional conservatoriums • Government funding priorities to areas such as science, sport, health and aged care • Music and Arts funding continually under pressure • Local Northern Rivers member - MLC • Government funding a primary source of funding for regional conservatoriums	• Ongoing impacts of the Rebuilding of Lismore after 2022 floods • Interest rates • Wage stagnation • Affordable housing crises and displacement of Lismore residents post 2022 flood • Increasing competition for workers • Significant staffing shortages across service sectors • Connectivity issues in regional Australia • Cost of living crisis - Household budget under pressure – focus on general living expenses (music lessons are a luxury)	• Ongoing health & social impacts from the catastrophic flood of 2022 • Increasing challenges for mental health and general wellbeing • Increasing use of video/virtual communication in business and social lives • Social media platforms widely used to connect socially • Social media becoming important marketing resource • Instant response expected through accessible technology • Demise of major music festivals • Closure of Southern Cross University's Bachelor of Contemporary Music at the Lismore campus

Environmental Scan

NRC team members examined the political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) environment and analysed the impacts and implications for NRC

TECHNOLOGICAL	LEGAL	ENVIRONMENTAL
• More digitally connected than ever before • 'Zoom' lessons for students • Young generations very 'tech savvy' • Technology provides opportunities to connect directly with current and future customers • Moving to cashless society with rapid advancement of 'smart' technology • Next generation 'addicted' to handheld devices • Laws restricting use and access to devices e.g. when driving • Rapid development of systems to enable efficient business operations • Regional Australia still has internet connectivity challenges	• Increase in compliance requirements for government funding • Legal entities must follow rules e.g. constitution • Government contracts requirements • Copy right requirements • Child protection legislation • Safe working environment requirements • Reporting requirements to government agencies	• Regional environmental disasters e.g. health, floods, fires • Increasing emphasis on sustainable business practices e.g. use of solar, water conservation, paperless offices, etc. • Significant debate and worldwide movement on climate change • Push for renewable energy sources e.g. solar, wind • Promotion of ethical business practices; particularly to workers in poorer countries • Campaigning and advocacy against the continued use of fossil fuels





Key Results Areas Matrix

to implement sustainable financial strategies for all operations.

	Focus on Resilience	Broaden our Impact	Develop our Regional Schools Program	Expand our Music Offerings	Focus on our Sustainability	Engage with our Partners	Develop our People
Continuous Improvement	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Music Education, Training and Performance	●	●	●	●		●	●
Strategic Partnerships	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Access and equity			●	●	●		
Clients including relationships with schools	●	●	●	●			●
Governance & Compliance	●				●		●
Risk Management	●				●		●
Financial Management			●	●	●	●	
Resource Management	●		●		●		●

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