



To whom it may concern:

### **2025 CORE SKILLS OCCUPATIONS LIST (CSOL) CONSULTATIONS**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the 2025 Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL).

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) is a member of Symphony Services Australia ("SSA"), which provides services to Australia's six symphony orchestras (the Adelaide, Melbourne, Queensland, Sydney, Tasmanian and West Australian Symphony Orchestras). SSA has made a detailed submission to this consultation process, which we fully support, and we refer you to that submission for additional details and case studies.

In December 2024, changes were made to the Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL) which were designed to replace "complex, out of date and inflexible occupation lists" with one consolidated list of job codes. At that time, a key code used by Australia's symphony orchestras, code 211213 (Musician: Instrumental) was removed from the CSOL, severely impacting the organisations, including ours, that rely on that code. ANZSCO 2022 code 211213 is equivalent to OSCA 2024 code 231633, Musician (Instrumental). Where we refer to job code 211213 in this document we are including both the ANZSCO and OSCA codes.

**We request that JSA reinstate ANZSCO code 211213 / OSCA code 231633 (Musician: Instrumental) to the Core Skills Occupation List.**

Orchestras are a highly specialised workplace, and changes announced to the CSOL in December 2024 have resulted in consequences that we are sure were unintended for the Australian orchestral sector. The removal of job code 211213: Musician (Instrumental) from the list has severely impacted our ability to engage non-Australian musicians in key ongoing roles within the orchestra on the Skills in Demand (SID) visa, on the rare occasions this is required.



The orchestras collectively engage nearly 3000 musicians and administrative personnel each year<sup>1</sup>. At present, there are fewer than five musicians or management employees on 482 visas and a further handful of recruitment processes underway that may result in an international appointment (personnel currently on 408 visas). These international personnel, though extremely small in number, are vital to the success of the Australian symphony orchestras including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. They provide our lifeblood by demonstrating the highest international artistry to inspire our Australian musicians to greater heights of performance.

If the code is not reinstated to CSOL, it is likely that many international musicians successful at audition and trial would refuse permanent positions in the orchestra. International musicians will not be attracted to working with Australian orchestras if we can only offer them the possibility of up to 4 years work using two consecutive two-year terms under the subclass 408 visa, with no pathway to permanent residency.

Unlike some industries, roles within a symphony orchestra are highly skilled and specific and leadership roles require skills that may not be available among younger or less experienced musicians. If the right person isn't identified through the local audition process, the global market generally provides a pool of appropriately qualified applicants who are willing to come to Australia, often bringing their family with them for an extended period of time. To maintain their excellence, orchestras tend to be highly stable with low turnover and a strong commitment to the artistic goals of the company.

SSA's lengthier submission contains details that support our request for job code 211213 to be reinstated to CSOL and outlines why it is vitally important to the orchestras of Australia. The submission also contains case studies that demonstrate our case.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> Including full time, part time and casual employees (taken from Creative Australia reporting, 2024)

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