



Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts**

Ref: IS24-000011

Mr Brian Mitchell MP
Committee Chair
Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

via: communications.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Mitchell

Thank you for inviting the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts to make a submission to the inquiry into challenges and opportunities within the Australian live music industry.

The department's submission is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

Philip Smith
First Assistant Secretary
Office of the Arts

22/05/2024



Australian Government

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts**

Inquiry into the challenges and opportunities within the Australian live music industry

SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

14 May 2024



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**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts**

The Office for the Arts is a division of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. It supports inclusiveness and growth in Australia's arts, entertainment and cultural sector, and protects its workforces and promotes Australian content and culture through existing functions and the five-year National Cultural Policy, *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*.

The Office for the Arts' purpose is to develop policies and deliver programs that encourage excellence in the arts, help to protect our cultural heritage and support public access to and participation in arts and culture in Australia. This is achieved through delivering strategic advice and policy development, effective program and grants management, regulatory management and collaborative stakeholder engagement. This includes through the implementation of *Revive*. The Office for the Arts welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry into the challenges and opportunities within the Australian live music industry.

The National Cultural Policy – *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*

On 30 January 2023, the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese and the Minister for the Arts, the Hon Tony Burke MP, launched the new National Cultural Policy— *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*.

Revive is a five-year plan to renew and revive Australia's arts, entertainment and cultural sector, following the most difficult period for the sector in generations. It delivers new momentum so that Australia's creative workers, organisations and audiences thrive and grow, and so that our arts, culture and heritage are re-positioned as central to Australia's future.

Backed by \$286 million in dedicated funding over 4 years, *Revive's* centrepiece is the establishment of Creative Australia – the Australian Government's new principal arts investment and advisory body. Within Creative Australia the government announced the establishment of Music Australia – a dedicated new body to support and invest in the Australian contemporary music industry.

Sustainability and growth of the industry

Through the National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, the government established Music Australia within Creative Australia, investing \$69.4 million in funding over 4 years to support and promote the Australian contemporary music industry to increase discoverability and develop markets and audiences. The increased support for the music industry through Music Australia will:

- grow the market for contemporary Australian music
- increase development of original music through investment in artistic creation

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- deliver song writing and recording initiatives in schools
- develop new strategic partnerships within and beyond the music sector, including to undertake research and data collection around key issues, including festivals and venues
- provide ongoing support for Sounds Australia – Australia’s export music market development initiative
- support industry professionals to learn business and management skills
- provide central coordination around access to live music venues for bands and solo artists
- develop new co-investment agreements with states, territories and industry to deliver national sector-wide priorities, and
- create Community Music Hubs in high density living areas¹.

The Music Australia Council (the Council), with representation from artists and industry and chaired by the Chief Executive Officer of Creative Australia, was established to provide strategic advice and guidance to the Australia Council Board about the initiatives for contemporary music to be delivered by Music Australia. The Council provides advice and recommendations regarding the priority investment, development, and research needs of the contemporary music industry in Australia.

Grants and support programs

Revive Live

On 14 May, as part of the 2024 Federal Budget, the government announced \$8.6 million in new funding to provide essential support to live music businesses, including live music venues and music festivals.

The *Revive Live* program will provide grant funding in the 2024-25 financial year to support the live music sector at a critical time of need. Funding will:

- support the long-term sustainability of presenting live Australian contemporary music and ongoing viability of live music venues;
- support music festivals to continue to operate and create a more sustainable industry; and
- allocate a minimum \$1.2 million of the total funding to improve accessibility and inclusion at live music events.

Revive Live will ensure the government is delivering on its commitments under the National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, to expand income opportunities for artists, increase opportunities for more diverse programming, support stronger cultural infrastructure, increase audiences for Australian original live music, and increase equity in access to arts and culture.

Live Music Australia

The government has supported the development, growth and innovation of Australian contemporary live music and live music venues through the \$20 million Live Music Australia program.

The Live Music Australia program is a competitive grants opportunity for small to medium sized venues that supports quality original Australian live music and is in its final year. In 2022 and 2023, the program included a round focused on support for music festivals.

The program is designed to bring more live music to Australian communities, funding applications up to a maximum of \$100,000, that support quality original Australian live music that is professionally staged. Funded activities include infrastructure upgrades, purchase of equipment, programming and promotional expenses and artist fees.

¹ *Revive*: Australia’s Cultural Policy p69

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In 2022 the program guidelines were expanded to include event insurance and administration costs as eligible grant expenditure.

Over the last 4 years, funding of \$17.5 million has supported 474 grants and more than 700 hundred venues in every state and territory from pubs in the remote outback, to clubs and theatres in major capital cities.

The final round of the program closed for applications on 12 March 2024 and will provide support to venue-based live music activity from mid-2024.

Regional Arts Fund

The Regional Arts Fund (the Fund) provides access to a range of social arts and cultural events, festivals, exhibitions, theatrical productions, and music concerts supporting the creativity and morale of local communities. Arts activities in regional areas provide catalysts that benefit communities by bringing people together.

Between 2016 and 2021, the Fund contributed to the creation of more than 600 artistic works across artforms such as dance, performance, visual art, music and theatre, and 1,074 small projects and professional development opportunities (see regionalarts.com.au/uploads/files/Connections-2016-2021.pdf). Grants to support music activities was the third most funded number of grants per artform, with 225 grants provided, with total funding of over \$960,000.

Revive announced an increase to the Fund of \$8.5 million over 4 years from 2023-24, in recognition of the vital role the arts play in strengthening local communities. This is providing additional funding for a mix of quick response grants and project grants, as well as strategic activities supporting professional development for artists and arts workers, and community capacity building projects.

From 2023-24, the Fund is providing approximately \$6 million per year to support artists and communities in regional and remote areas.

Festivals Australia

The Festivals Australia program supports a range of innovative and engaging arts activities at festivals and one-off community celebrations across regional and remote Australia. The multi-artform nature of festivals and community celebrations provide important opportunities for professional musicians and communities to participate in live music events.

In the most recent round of Festivals Australia funding, projects featuring music included the 'Made in the Northern Rivers' program of commissioned live performances held in conjunction with the Bangalow Film Festival, 'Sounds of Country' for presentation at the Daminmin Arts and Culture Festival, and the 'Retreat Creek Hotel Presents' stage as part of the Meadow Music Festival.

Support for Music exports and international

The government funds Sounds Australia through Creative Australia. Sounds Australia provides a centralised, whole-of-industry service to activate the world's best networking, performance and business-matching opportunities for export-ready Australian artists and music businesses at international showcase events.

As a music export body, Sounds Australia partners internationally to promote Australian music. There may be opportunities to work with them to engage internationally. More information about Sounds Australia is at <https://soundsaustralia.com.au/welcome/>.

The International Cultural Diplomacy Arts Fund (ICDAF) supports activities in Australia and around the world that promote the government's international arts and cultural engagement and cultural diplomacy priorities, and assist the government in meeting Australia's international commitments relating to arts and culture.

It is likely that opportunities may arise for Australian artists to attend international events (be it networking, performance or an additional type) with short notice, and cost is a significant barrier to attendance. There are limited specific quick response grants run by the Australian Government for Australian music acts.

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ICDAF funding of \$173,408 has been provided over the past 3 years to support the attendance of the Australian act at the Eurovision Song Contest. Eurovision is a significant opportunity for the selected Australian act to develop their audience internationally.

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