



AUSTRALIAN FESTIVAL
ASSOCIATION

SUBMISSION BY THE AUSTRALIAN FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION TO THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY CONSULTATION

The AFA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country where we live, work, and celebrate festivals. We pay our respect to them, their Culture, and their Elders past, present and emerging.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is a key part of Australia's national identity, and we all have a role to play in celebrating and preserving the knowledge and wisdom of the world's oldest continuous culture.

The AFA supports the Commonwealth Government's commitment to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full.

About the Australian Festival Association (AFA)

The Australian Festival Association was formed in 2018 to represent the shared needs of the festival industry. A membership body, the AFA exists to elevate the festival industry and our vision is that the thriving festival industry is well recognised for its invaluable role in the cultural, economic, and social wellbeing of Australia. We represent members who create and service festivals in every state and territory and in every position from the promoter to the supplier.

Festivals in Australia

Australian festivals deliver \$2.7bn¹ in output to the economy every year through ticket sales to some of the most celebrated events across the country. Nearly 10,000 FTE employees¹ from rigging and audio to ticketing and hospitality, work the festival circuit in a travelling gig economy. Nearly half (46%)² of all Australians attend festivals every year, and over a quarter of over 15 year old's attending music festivals.

Support for the Australian Contemporary Music Industry Joint Submission

The AFA was one of the many peak bodies that signed the Joint Submission from the contemporary music industry on the new National Cultural Policy. We strongly support the Joint Submission and would be happy to provide any further information on the impact of the recommendations in the Joint Submission on the festival industry.

¹Findings from LEIF and EY's study on the Economic cost of COVID-19 on Australia's Live Entertainment Industry - Festivals "Multi Category & Contemporary" combined.

²National Arts Participation Survey, Australia Council - <https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Creating-Our-Future-Results-of-the-National-Arts-Participation-Survey-PDF.pdf>



Summary of the AFA submission

In addition to the Joint Submission the AFA would also recommend that the new National Cultural Policy includes the following:

1. A Business Interruption Insurance scheme for live events.
2. Skills development and career pathways to train and attract new and returning festival workers.
3. Extend venue-based live music funding to music festivals.
4. The first ever national report on festivals in Australia.
5. Support the implementation of recommendations in the 2022 Music Industry Review.
6. Action on the value of tickets.

1. A Business Interruption Insurance

A Commonwealth-backed business interruption insurance negotiated in partnership with the states and territories, to protect live music investments and consumer confidence against COVID-related cancellations.

Due to a market failure in the event insurance industry and the continuing impacts of the pandemic, cancellations to festivals and artist tours, which have a flow on effect to festivals remains the key issue for the AFA and its members.

Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and NSW have all responded with some type of cancellation program at various times throughout the pandemic to varying levels of success. The feedback we have received from AFA members is that the NSW Government's scheme is the easiest to apply for and access. The AFA encourages the Commonwealth to look at the NSW scheme as the best option to roll-out nationwide, in partnership with state and territory governments.

Any scheme should -

- Consult with industry as well as the states and territories, given their existing schemes.
- Ensure flexibility to the changing and unpredictable nature of this pandemic.
- Be simple to register for and provide fast pre-approval or confidence of coverage.
- Consider artists as promoters, to allow them to access any national scheme.
- Ensure payouts are designed to flow down the supply-chain to festival suppliers.



2. Skills Development and Career Pathways

As a result of COVID-19, significant numbers of professionals have left the creative workforce. In 2021, data capture project *ilostmygig* found that 60% of respondents were looking to other careers. This figure is almost certainly higher now as the long tail of COVID remains.

The AFA supports the fast-tracking of programs supporting skills development and education pathways for the industry. This support should also extend to business development and management education in fields such as governance and accounting as festivals attract entrepreneurs who go onto run small businesses.

3. Extend venue-based live music funding to music festivals

Funding programs such as Live Music Australia that are “designed to bring more live music to Australian communities” and to “support quality original Australian live music that is professionally staged, with a focus on small to medium venues” should be extended to support music festivals that achieve those same aims in greenfield sites or other venues.

4. The first ever national report on Festivals in Australia

Currently there is no research or data available on the festival sector nationwide. Individual states and territories have funded or conducted some research on certain aspects of the sector. Creative Victoria supported the most comprehensive research on the sector, which was conducted by RMIT University in partnership with the AFA and has been transformative in the AFA's ability to quantify the contribution of festivals in Victoria.

Given the lack of nationally available research and data on our industry, the AFA asks that the Commonwealth partner with the AFA and an Australian University to produce a report on the festival landscape in Australia.

This research would include:

- National quantitative, qualitative, and economic impact data on festivals, festival venues, businesses and audiences.
- Produce the first ever national database of festivals to drive tourism, celebrate Australian talent and showcase the best contemporary music events across the Australian landscape.
- Collate data that can be benchmarked by industry to grow First Nations and other racially marginalised artist numbers on festival line ups.
- Data to compare the Australian festival industry to global markets.
- A comparison of the regulatory environments for festivals across each state & territory.



- The impacts of Climate Change on major outdoor public gatherings and the recent impacts of bushfires, floods, and other severe weather events on some of Australia's longest running festivals.
- Supporting Governments across the country at every level with data that has not been collated in this way before.
- Determining where there is opportunity for industry growth and development having produced this baseline.

The AFA would partner and consult with State and Territory Governments to include:

- The availability of venues for festivals in each jurisdiction along with any gaps.
- Climate change impacts and alignment with their planning strategies.
- An assessment of funding programs directed to regional events and their impact on local police, medical and transport services.
- Regulatory mapping i.e. police user charges.

5. Work in partnership with the music industry to implement the recommendations of the 2022 Music Industry Review

The Music Industry Review report is expected at the end of August 2022. The AFA and individual members contributed financial, and in-kind, support to this process alongside other industry organisations and is committed to change.

The AFA asks the Commonwealth to work with the Music Industry in consideration of the recommendations, with reference to Industrial Relations implications. The music industry is the original gig economy and as such, there is a lot of work to do to ensure workers have a safe and thriving workplace.

6. Action on the value of tickets

The AFA supported coordinated action with the states and territories on unauthorised ticketing re-sellers that sell fake tickets or sell tickets at highly inflated prices on the secondary market.

In addition to our submission, the AFA also supports elements of the submissions from other music industry organisations.

- **Independent First Nations Music Office (AMIN submission)**
 - An independent body with the remit of supporting the needs of First Nations musicians, industry professionals, businesses, and audiences. It could also be connected in with other First Nations art forms - such as theatre, dance, visual arts.



- **Regional Touring Network expansion (AMIN & MusicNSW submission)**
 - National expansion of MusicNSW's Regional Touring. Network website - an easy-to-use, free, informative map-based tool to help artists and industry expand their regional horizons.
 - Extend the Regional Touring Network to include festivals

Recommendations from the AFA submission within the 5 Pillar framework:

1. First Nations First	Music Industry Joint Submission Festival Research Skills Development and Career Pathways First Nations Music Office National Regional Touring Network Music Industry Review
2. A Place for Every Story	Music Industry Joint Submission Extension of venues funding to festivals Festival Research National Regional Touring Network Music Industry Review
3. The Centrality of the Artist	Music Industry Joint Submission Business Interruption Fund Festival Research Skills Development and Pathways Action on ticket value National Regional Touring Network Music Industry Review
4. Strong Institutions	Music Industry Joint Submission Business Interruption Fund Skills Development and Pathways Extension of venues funding to festivals Festival Research Action on ticket value National Regional Touring Network Music Industry Review
5. Reaching the Audience	Music Industry Joint Submission Extension of venues funding to festivals Festival Research Action on ticket value National Regional Touring Network