

**National Cultural Policy Submission**

1469359

Public

Organisation

PBS 106.7FM



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

PBS 106.7FM strongly supports the continuation of a National Cultural Policy. This submission focuses on Strong Cultural Infrastructure and Engaging the Audience, with links to A Place for Every Story and Centrality of the Artist. For PBS, the central issue is clear: Australian music needs strong pathways between artists and audiences.

PBS has been part of Melbourne’s music community since 1979. As a community radio station, it broadcasts more than 80 specialist music programs across FM, digital radio, online streaming, on demand, the PBS app and live events. PBS amplifies under-represented music, supports the local music community and is powered by volunteer specialist announcers, other volunteers and a small staff team. Its announcers bring music knowledge, curatorial independence and community connection to programs that help audiences discover music overlooked by commercial media and global platforms.

This is cultural infrastructure in practice. PBS supports local artists, labels, venues, festivals, record stores, community organisations and audiences through airplay, interviews, live-to-air performances, partnerships, training and music discovery. It creates space for First Nations artists, CALD communities, emerging and independent musicians, specialist genres and local scenes. We curate, contextualise and champion music, connecting artists with audiences through trusted local voices.

This role is increasingly important as Australian music discoverability comes under pressure. Digital platforms have expanded access to music, but access alone does not guarantee local discovery, diversity or artist sustainability. Creative Australia’s Listening In research found that while local listening is under pressure, many Australians feel positively about Australian music and want to hear more of it. This shows the opportunity: audiences are open to Australian music, but discovery pathways need strengthening.

Recent academic research reinforces this concern. In *Down, and Under Pressure: The Decline of the New Music Economy in Australia 2000–2024*, Tim Kelly analyses ARIA revenues and Australian top 100 charts from 2000 to 2024. The study finds that while streaming correlates with market growth, new music revenues and chart share have declined significantly. This raises serious investment, streaming remuneration and cultural concerns for artists releasing new recordings in Australia.

This pressure is also structural. Community radio and local music media are part of the solution to Australian music discoverability, but this infrastructure is under threat. Advertising income has shifted away from local media and toward global digital platforms, weakening organisations that connect artists, audiences and communities.

PBS recommends that the next National Cultural Policy recognise community broadcasting and local music media as essential cultural infrastructure for Australian music. This could include secure community broadcasting funding, support for Australian music curation and discoverability, investment in digital and on demand infrastructure, live music partnerships, audience development, and measures that strengthen local cultural media in a market dominated by global digital platforms.

Australian music will not be discovered, valued or sustained simply because it exists online. It needs trusted local platforms, human curation, community relationships and resilient organisations.