

# Applause<sup>®</sup> Genie

We connect and up-skill up-and-coming, ambitious artists and musicians to shortcut their success so they can confidently **do what they LOVE all the time!**

Friday, 15 May 2026

## **Policy Response: Strengthening Music, Music Business and Live Production Education in Australia**

This response focuses specifically on **music education, music business training, and live production workforce development** within the broader context of *Revive: Australia's Cultural Policy*. While the policy provides a strong overarching framework for supporting artists as workers and strengthening cultural infrastructure, this submission addresses critical gaps and opportunities in how Australia educates, trains and sustains its current and future music workforce.

This submission recognises and acknowledges the substantial work already being undertaken by schools and educators. The recommendations within this paper are intended not as criticism of existing programs, but as an expansion of pathways to reflect the realities of the contemporary music industry, where careers increasingly combine performance, business, technology, production, education, entrepreneurship, and portfolio employment.

### **Alignment with Revive**

*Revive* recognises that:

- artists are both **creators and workers**
- sustainable careers require **vocational pathways and training infrastructure**
- there are existing **skills shortages across technical and production roles**
- education systems must support **access, participation, and career development** across the creative industries

However, while the policy acknowledges workforce development broadly, it does not sufficiently address systemic gaps in music business education and live production training, nor the urgent need for nationally consistent vocational pathways.

### **1. Critical Skills Shortage in Live Production and Technical Services**

There is a national skills shortage in live production and technical services, particularly in:

- audio engineering
- lighting and staging
- production management
- touring crew and technical coordination

While *Revive* identifies shortages in “technical and administrative positions... including lighting technicians or sound engineers” , it does not provide a clear national training strategy to address this.

### **Key Issues**

- Some Australian states have little to no formal vocational training pathways in live production
- Training is often informal, ad hoc, or industry-led, limiting scalability
- Barriers to entry remain high for regional, diverse, and emerging workers
- There is a lack of diversity within live production crews, particularly in relation to gender, cultural background, and accessibility. This limits workforce growth, innovation, and inclusion, and reinforces barriers for underrepresented groups seeking to enter the industry

### **Recommendation**

- Establish a National Live Production Workforce Strategy
- Ensure training design and delivery actively addresses diversity and inclusion, including targeted pathways for women, First Nations peoples, culturally diverse communities, people with disability, and regional participants
- Encourage all state and territory governments to include:
  - CUA30425 Certificate III in Live Production and Technical Services
  - CUA50425 Diploma of Live Production and Technical Serviceson priority training lists to unlock subsidised funding
- Support expansion of proven programs such as CrewCare’s The Weasle Eicke Scholarship Pathways to Jobs in Live Music Program, which has demonstrated strong outcomes in workforce entry and job readiness
- Assist CrewCare to develop reskilling training for more experienced crew.
- Assist CrewCare to participate in Live Production and Technical Services Training Package updates

## **2. Recognising Existing Strengths in Queensland Music Education**

Queensland has a long history of excellence in school-based music education, particularly through its Instrumental Music Program and strong ensemble culture within state and independent schools. These programs have provided generations of young Australians with high-quality tuition, ensemble performance opportunities, music literacy, discipline, collaboration skills, and pathways into further study and professional music careers.

School concert bands, orchestras, jazz ensembles, choirs, and contemporary music programs continue to play a critical role in developing Australia’s cultural life and creative workforce. Instrumental music teachers and classroom music educators across Queensland have made significant contributions to nurturing musicianship, creativity, confidence, and community engagement.

Queensland’s Instrumental Music Program is widely regarded as one of the strongest school-based music education models in Australia and is frequently admired by educators and industry professionals across other states and territories. Its long-standing commitment to ensemble participation, instrumental tuition, performance opportunities, and pathway development has created a vibrant culture of music education that has contributed significantly to Australia’s creative industries and cultural life.

The program is often viewed as a benchmark model for accessible, school-based music education, particularly in its capacity to develop musicianship, teamwork, discipline, confidence, and community

engagement alongside artistic excellence. Expanding similar models nationally would provide significant benefits for young Australians and help strengthen future creative workforce pipelines across both metropolitan and regional communities.

There is strong potential for elements of Queensland's approach to be adapted and supported Australia-wide, ensuring equitable access to quality instrumental music education regardless of geographic location or school sector. Such expansion would align strongly with the goals of Revive by supporting participation, workforce development, cultural engagement, and long-term sustainability within the arts sector.

### **Recommendation**

- Recognise Queensland's Instrumental Music Program as a leading national model for accessible, school-based music education and acknowledge its long-standing contribution to Australia's cultural and creative industries workforce.
- Support the expansion and adaptation of successful elements of Queensland's Instrumental Music Program across all Australian states and territories to improve equitable access to quality music education.
- Increase investment in school-based instrumental music, ensemble programs, and contemporary music education to strengthen participation, creativity, collaboration, and student wellbeing.
- Ensure students in metropolitan, regional, rural, and remote communities have equitable access to instrumental tuition, ensemble participation, and performance opportunities.

### **3. Reform of the CUA Training Package**

The current **CUA Creative Arts and Culture Training Package** contains structural issues that limit its effectiveness.

#### **Example: Qualification Packaging Failure**

Within CUA60525 Advanced Diploma of Music (Business specialisation):

- Packaging rules require selection of 5 Group E electives
- At least 2 must be CUA-coded units
- Only two eligible CUA units exist, both in high-level graphic design

This is just one example of many that create:

- Unachievable requirements for music professionals
- Misalignment with industry practice and skill needs
- Barriers to completion for otherwise competent candidates

### **Recommendation**

- Immediate technical review and correction of packaging rules
- Greater industry consultation in qualification design
- Establish a rapid response mechanism for correcting errors in training packages

#### **4. The Need for Music Business, Entrepreneurship and WHS Education**

The Australian music industry is overwhelmingly freelance and self-employed: 86% of Australian musicians work freelance, with only 14% in salaried roles (Bartleet et al., 2020) This reality aligns strongly with *Revive's* recognition of artists as workers and small businesses.

##### **Current Gap**

Music education—particularly in:

- conservatoriums
- universities
- some VET delivery in Schools programs

does not adequately prepare musicians for:

- self-employment
- business operations
- marketing and audience development
- event management
- workplace health and safety (WHS)
- copyright and intellectual property

##### **Recommendation**

Embed core business competencies across all music training, including:

- small business management
- marketing and branding
- live event planning and risk management
- copyright, licensing, and IP

Training should be delivered through a blended model:

- formal VET and higher education
- industry-led short courses and micro-credentials
- partnerships with organisations such as APRA AMCOS, PPCA, and OneMusic

#### **5. Strengthening Copyright and Industry Knowledge**

Despite its importance, copyright literacy remains low among emerging musicians.

##### **Issues**

- Limited delivery of units such as:
  - CUACMP311 Implement copyright arrangements
  - CUACMP511 Manage copyright arrangements
- Inconsistent teaching capability, especially in secondary schools

## **Recommendation**

- Make copyright and IP core, mandatory learning areas for Secondary and Universities lecturers
- Develop national teaching resources in partnership with industry and music education experts
- Support educators with professional development in music business and copyright

## **6. Addressing Gaps in Secondary and Teacher Education**

With declining ATAR participation in music:

- Fewer students are engaging in senior music pathways
- There is increased reliance on VET delivery in schools

## **Current Challenge**

Queensland schools already deliver high-quality instrumental and classroom music programs; however, many educators have limited access to current music industry professional development outside traditional performance pathways.

Many school music teachers:

- Lack industry experience
- Are underprepared to deliver industry-focused units
- Are not equipped to teach career pathways beyond performance
- Do not have skills or knowledge to deliver core units:
  - CUACMP311 Implement copyright arrangements
  - CUAIND313 Work effectively in the music industry
  - CUAIND314 Plan a career in the creative arts industry

As the music industry evolves, there is increasing need for educators to understand:

- music business models
- live production workflows
- freelance and portfolio careers
- digital marketing and distribution
- contemporary copyright and licensing systems
- workplace health and safety obligations within live events and touring environments

## **Recommendation**

- Provide targeted upskilling for music teachers
- Embed music business and industry units into teacher education degrees
- Provide funded professional development and industry immersion opportunities for music educators
- Develop partnerships between schools, festivals, venues, recording studios, and live production companies
- Create nationally accessible teaching resources aligned to contemporary music industry practices

- Support regional teachers through online training, mentoring, and industry engagement programs
- Ensure access to CUA30920 Certificate III in Music (Business) in schools is supported with:
  - industry partnerships
  - mentoring programs
  - accessible teaching resources

## **7. Expanding Awareness of Music Career Pathways**

Research shows:

- One-third of music jobs are in support roles (technical, management, administration)
- Many musicians maintain portfolio careers, combining multiple income streams

Yet education systems still prioritise performance as the primary career outcome.

### **Recommendation**

- Broaden curriculum to reflect:
  - technical roles (live crew, production)
  - business roles (management, marketing, booking)
  - hybrid and portfolio careers
- Promote career mapping and skills audits for students
- Education systems should better reflect the breadth of contemporary music careers, including:
  - artist management
  - touring and event coordination
  - sound production and engineering
  - venue operations
  - festival administration
  - music marketing and publicity
  - content creation and digital media
  - community arts and creative facilitation
- Students should be exposed to industry role models and real-world case studies demonstrating diverse and sustainable career pathways within Australia's music sector.

## **8. Supporting Portfolio Careers**

The concept of a portfolio career is central to sustainability in music:

- combining performance, teaching, production, and other work
- balancing creative and financial outcomes

### **Policy Opportunity**

This aligns strongly with *Revive's* principles of:

- sustainable careers
- artist as worker
- vocational pathways

### **Recommendation**

- Integrate portfolio career planning into all music qualifications
- Teach:
  - income diversification
  - freelance management
  - networking and collaboration
  - long-term career strategy
- Allow flexibility of the CUA Training Package to allow for a 'portfolio qualification, with the ability for learners to pick and choose units to build a qualification best suited to their needs.

## **9. Preparing Students for the Digital Music Industry**

The music industry has undergone significant transformation through digital distribution, streaming services, social media marketing, online collaboration, and emerging technologies. Sustainable careers in music increasingly require digital literacy alongside creative and technical skills.

### **Current Gap**

Many music education programs do not adequately prepare students for:

- digital music distribution
- streaming platforms and royalty systems
- content creation and audience engagement
- social media strategy and branding
- digital marketing analytics
- remote collaboration workflows
- emerging technologies, including AI-assisted creative tools

### **Recommendation**

- Embed digital music business skills across secondary, VET, and higher education programs
- Develop training resources addressing contemporary music industry technologies
- Support educators to maintain currency in digital industry practices
- Encourage partnerships with industry organisations and digital service providers
- Ensure students understand both opportunities and ethical considerations relating to emerging technologies and AI in creative practice

## **10. Supporting Mental Health and Sustainable Creative Careers**

The music and live production industries present unique pressures, including irregular employment, financial instability, touring demands, long working hours, performance anxiety, and burnout. Sustainable workforce development must include a focus on wellbeing and psychologically safe workplaces.

While *Revive* recognises artists as workers, greater emphasis is needed on supporting long-term workforce wellbeing across both creative and technical sectors.

### **Recommendation**

- Embed mental health, self-care, and wellbeing education into music and live production training
- Promote psychologically safe workplace practices within industry training
- Support industry-led wellbeing initiatives and mentoring programs
- Develop resources addressing burnout prevention, fatigue management, and freelance sustainability
- Encourage partnerships with organisations such as Support Act and CrewCare to support workforce wellbeing initiatives

## **Conclusion**

While *Revive* provides a strong foundation—particularly in recognising artists as workers and the need for training pathways—it requires targeted reform and expansion to fully support the music sector.

Australia already possesses strong foundations in music education, particularly through school instrumental programs, ensemble traditions, and dedicated educators. However, the modern music industry now requires broader, more integrated pathways that combine creativity with business capability, technical skills, digital literacy, and workforce sustainability.

By building upon existing strengths and modernising training approaches, Australia can better prepare emerging musicians, technicians, educators, and creative workers for long-term, sustainable careers within a rapidly evolving industry landscape.

## **Priority Actions**

### **1. Critical Skills Shortage in Live Production and Technical Services**

Develop and fund a National Live Production Workforce Strategy in partnership with industry, RTOs, state governments, and organisations such as CrewCare to expand subsidised training pathways, improve workforce diversity, and address national shortages in technical and production roles.

### **2. Recognising Existing Strengths in Queensland Music Education**

Establish a national school music development initiative modelled on successful elements of Queensland’s Instrumental Music Program, supporting equitable access to instrumental tuition, ensemble participation, and contemporary music education across all Australian states and territories.

### **3. Reform of the CUA Training Package**

Undertake an immediate national review of the CUA Creative Arts and Culture Training Package to correct structural and packaging issues, improve industry relevance, and establish an ongoing rapid-response consultation mechanism involving educators, RTOs, and industry professionals.

### **4. The Need for Music Business, Entrepreneurship and WHS Education**

Mandate the inclusion of music business, entrepreneurship, copyright, and workplace health and safety competencies across secondary, VET, and higher education music programs to better prepare students for freelance and portfolio careers.

### **5. Strengthening Copyright and Industry Knowledge**

Develop a nationally consistent copyright and music industry education framework, including mandatory delivery of copyright and intellectual property learning, educator professional development, and accessible teaching resources developed in partnership with industry organisations.

### **6. Addressing Gaps in Secondary and Teacher Education**

Fund a national music educator upskilling program that provides industry immersion, professional development, mentoring, and contemporary teaching resources to support delivery of industry-focused music education in schools.

### **7. Expanding Awareness of Music Career Pathways**

Broaden music curriculum frameworks and career education initiatives to reflect the full range of contemporary music industry careers, including technical, business, production, digital, and portfolio-based pathways.

### **8. Supporting Portfolio Careers**

Embed portfolio career planning, freelance management, networking, and income diversification skills into all music qualifications, while increasing flexibility within the CUA Training Package to support customised career-focused learning pathways.

### **9. Preparing Students for the Digital Music Industry**

Introduce nationally supported digital music industry training initiatives that integrate digital distribution, social media strategy, streaming systems, emerging technologies, and AI literacy into music education programs at all levels.

### **10. Supporting Mental Health and Sustainable Creative Careers**

Implement a creative industries wellbeing framework that embeds mental health education, psychologically safe workplace practices, self-care strategies, and workforce wellbeing partnerships into music and live production training and industry development programs.

### **Andrea Smith Biography**

Andrea Smith brings over 35 years of experience in Queensland's music and creative industries, with a career spanning venue and band management, event production, music business education, and mentoring. Early in her career, she played a key role in supporting the development of major Australian acts including Powderfinger, Regurgitator, Custard and Screamfeeder, and has since worked with a wide range of artists and industry professionals through her business Applause Genie, including Ian Haug, Cindy Vogels, Sahara Beck and Doug Ford.

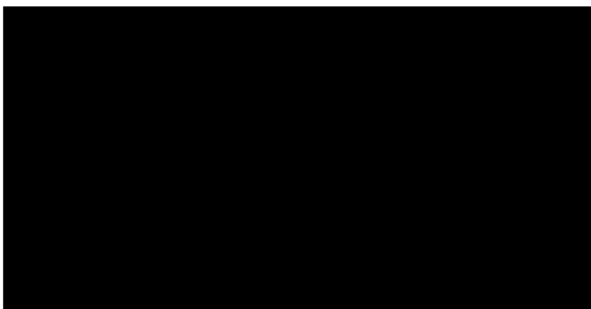
As a vocational educator, Andrea has trained thousands of students across TAFE and the Queensland College of Music, delivering programs from Certificate II to Advanced Diploma level in music and Music Business, with many graduates progressing into successful careers across performance, management, festivals, venues and industry organisations., such as Ball Park Music and Thelma Plum.

In 2025, Andrea was appointed as a Board Director of CrewCare, further strengthening her contribution to workforce development and wellbeing in the live production and technical services sector.

Her contribution to education and mentoring has been widely recognised through multiple awards and nominations, including:

- Finalist, Queensland Training Awards (Vocational Teacher/Trainer of the Year - multiple years)
- Finalist, Australian Women in Music Awards (Humanitarian - Education/Mentoring)
- Recipient of four WIPO Women in IP scholarships
- Recipient of a Queensland Overseas Foundation Bursary

Andrea continues to lead workforce development and mentoring initiatives through Applause Genie and as co-producer of the Turn Up Music Industry Conference, supporting the next generation of music professionals.



**Andrea Smith**  
**Applause Genie**