

Submission to Australia's National Cultural Policy

[RTRFM](#) is an independent, non-profit community radio station in WA that provides an alternative voice for Boorloo and beyond. Founded in 1977, we champion local music and support musical diversity through 50+ specialist music shows and a huge programs of events. That includes our iconic music festival In the Pines, which celebrated 33 years in 2026 and has been a springboard for acts including Tame Impala, Eskimo Joe, Jebediah, Stella Donnelly, Abbe May and more. In 2025, [RTRFM won Best Music Website at the Webbys](#) and was recognised with [the top honour at the Community Radio Awards](#).

We are proud to have 400 active volunteers keeping this institution alive. But RTRFM doesn't just reflect the community by giving its members a voice; we are also funded by them. We raises funds through a major donor drive each August called Radiothon, aiming for \$350,000pa (or a quarter of operating costs). We source remaining revenue through the development of partnerships with local businesses and organisations.

We call upon the recognition of the following in the new National Cultural Policy.

- 1) The representation/prominence of WA musicians/artists at the national level

Whether it's due to the tyranny of distance or an eastern state bias, we have long seen how WA talent is often relegated to the back of the pack. National tours are cost-prohibitive, and the drift of formerly-progressive-and-Australian-skewing outlets to mainstream, international acts (most likely to counter the rising popularity of streaming services) has left many incredible and talented artists in the wilderness. Travel/insurance subsidies, a commitment to local support acts and state-representative broadcast quotas would be a good start.

- 2) Consistent and improved funding/recognition of the community radio sector

Monash University recently published the report '[Community Radio and Australian Music: Building the music media ecosystem](#),' which found that Australia's community radio music stations generate an estimated \$153 million in added value to the music industry annually, broadcasting more than double the volume of local music played by commercial networks. As one of the country's leading community radio stations, RTRFM was proud to participate in the study, which also included the findings that 30 per cent of weekly listeners (1.6 million Australians) discovered a local or emerging artist by listening to community radio, and more than 1.3 million listeners went on to buy merchandise, music or gig tickets. Federal funding of the sector has largely been stagnant despite recent incremental improvements/indexing,



but community radio is still underfunded. There is a common misconception—for RTRFM at least—that we are primarily supported by the government, when—again, in WA at least—broadcasters like us are excluded from many of the cultural funds (such as Contemporary Music) that we would otherwise benefit from. We suggest a) firmer recognition of community radio in the new National Cultural Policy, b) suitable tweaks made to government grants that allow for more opportunities within appropriate grants/funds, and c) federal consideration of increased sector funding in line with [CBAA's Roadmap 2033](#).

With thanks,

Simon Miraudo
General Manager
RTRFM

