

## National Cultural Policy Submission

1470084

Public

Organisation

The Pack Music Cooperative Ltd

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The Pack is Australia's first musician-owned streaming platform, registered as a non-distributing cooperative in Western Australia. We will return 70% of revenue to artists, direct 15% to sector development, and operate on 15%. We use human-only curation, geo-fenced local discovery, and a user-centric payment model. We were built by working musicians who looked at the existing platforms and concluded that the problem was ownership, not technology.

Revive did important work. Creative Australia, Music Australia, Writing Australia, Creative Workplaces and First Nations Arts have given parts of the sector a voice they did not have in 2022. Revive Live kept (some) venues open. The streaming content rules and Location Offset have moved the screen sector forward.

Music has not seen comparable progress. Music Australia is welcome, but its remit and resourcing sit well below what the contemporary music sector needs to recover from a decade of platform-driven income collapse.

Recorded music revenue flowing to Australian artists has not improved in any way that touches working musicians. The Raising Their Voices recommendations remain only partly implemented. For a sector that contributes heavily to the \$67.4 billion cultural economy and employs across every postcode, the public investment is not proportionate.

The pillars, from where we stand

**Pillar 1 — First Nations First.** Cooperative ownership models offer First Nations musicians something the major platforms cannot: governance rights, collective control of catalogue, and protection of cultural material under member-determined protocols. We would like to see policy actively support cooperatives in music.

**Pillar 2 — A Place for Every Story.** Geo-fenced local discovery is the practical answer to algorithmic homogenisation. Australian listeners cannot find Australian artists if discovery is built around globalisation and homogenisation. Policy should treat local discoverability as core cultural infrastructure.

**Pillar 3 — Centrality of the Artist.** The 70% artist share is not a marketing line, it is what cooperative ownership can deliver when the artists are the owners. Fair remuneration in recorded music will not come from asking incumbent platforms to behave differently. It will come from supporting alternatives.

**Pillar 4 — Strong Cultural Infrastructure.** Independent Australian-owned digital infrastructure for music should be named, funded and protected in the next policy. At present, every dollar Australians spend on streaming leaves the country.

**Pillar 5 — Engaging the Audience.** Audiences are ready for ethical alternatives. They need to know these alternatives exist.

The Pack has received no Commonwealth investment to date. Cooperative and platform-cooperative models sit awkwardly with existing assessment panels, which are configured for grant-funded organisations, not member-owned infrastructure. The next policy should consider panel composition and assessment criteria so that alternative and innovative proposals can be properly read and supported. Mirlo and Jam.coop exist internationally for a reason. Australia should not be the last country to fund one.

What we would like to see

Direct investment in Australian-owned, artist-owned music infrastructure. DGR Item 1 pathways for cooperatives operating in the cultural sector. Assessment reform. A music sector recovery plan with the scale the screen sector has been afforded.