

National Cultural Policy Submission

1470227

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Individual

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I write from nearly a decade at the operational core of Australia's independent music sector as an music artist manager, music business lecturer, founding member of the [REDACTED], and founder of a music technology platform built on direct research with independent artists and their teams. That research revealed a consistent, sector-wide problem: independent artists are losing significant time each week to fragmented, inadequate tools, time stolen from the creative work this policy exists to support.

The infrastructure gap is digital, not just physical:

The consultation paper rightly identifies that digital tools are reshaping how creative work is produced, distributed and discovered. But \,Strong Cultural Infrastructure\, is still framed around institutions, venues, and collecting organisations. For independent artists in 2026, operational infrastructure, the tools, platforms, and systems their teams use to function, is just as foundational. Without it, no amount of funding for live music or arts education reaches music artists who cannot sustain the administrative weight of a modern release. The next policy must explicitly recognise digital operational infrastructure as cultural infrastructure.

Australian music tech deserves recognition and investment:

There is a thriving, largely invisible cohort of Australian founders building music technology solutions that directly serve this gap. Tools for release management, rights administration, royalty transparency, fan engagement, and artist team coordination are built by companies that are part of Australia's cultural ecosystem. They are building the operational layer that artists depend on. Yet they receive no recognition in cultural policy, no pathway to arts-adjacent funding, and no coordinated support. The next policy should establish a dedicated funding stream or grant mechanism for Australian music tech companies building artist-serving tools, and formally recognise music technology as cultural infrastructure worthy of strategic investment.

AI and streaming require urgent structural intervention:

Underpinning all of this is a remuneration crisis. Australian artists' recordings are being ingested into AI training datasets without consent or compensation. The current per-stream payment model, compounded by algorithmic systems that systematically favour major label catalogues, leaves independent Australian artists under-compensated and under-discovered on the platforms that now define music consumption. Policy must mandate opt-in consent frameworks for AI training on copyrighted works, support Australia's engagement in international treaty reform, and drive transparency in streaming royalty structures. A move toward user-centric payment models would meaningfully shift value back to the artists this policy centres.

Supporting Australian music artists as workers means more than celebrating their creativity, it means building the systems around them that allow them to sustain it. The next National Cultural Policy has an opportunity to lead: by funding the Australian innovators solving these problems, protecting artists from AI exploitation, and demanding fair value from the platforms that profit from Australian music.