

**MUSICSA SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY CONSULTATION****About MusicSA**

MusicSA is the peak body and advocate for the South Australian contemporary music industry. A not-for-profit organisation with over 30 years of history, MusicSA promotes, supports and develops the local industry by nurturing careers, creating pathways, and delivering industry and professional development. MusicSA connects artists, venues, festivals and music businesses, and advocates on behalf of the sector to government at state and national levels.

MusicSA is a member of the Australian Music Industry Network (AMIN), which connects the peak contemporary music industry bodies in every state and territory: Music Victoria, MusicNSW, WAM, QMusic, Music NT, Music Tasmania, MusicSA and MusicACT. AMIN advocates and operates at the national level on behalf of the Australian contemporary music industry and local grassroots ecosystems.

MusicSA is a signatory to the AMIN submission and the national industry Next Generation Now submission.

**The South Australian Context**

South Australia's contemporary music industry contributes \$490 million to gross state product and supports more than 9,200 jobs annually. ([source](#))

The state has a rich cultural foundation: decades of WOMADelaide, the Adelaide Festival and Fringe, and bold arts policy in the 1960s and 70s that positioned South Australia as a global leader. That legacy continues to inspire local practicing artists and art-making today.

As a smaller state, South Australia faces structural disadvantages. Per capita arts investment is lower, access to eastern seaboard music business hubs is difficult, and the effort required to secure national and international opportunities is disproportionately greater. The consequences are real - fewer touring circuits, fewer professional development pathways, reduced access to national showcases, and ongoing talent drain to larger markets.

State funding for the contemporary music industry has not increased since 2014, losing nearly 20% of its real value to inflation. One-off election and policy funding is welcome but it does not substitute for sustained investment. Meanwhile, national programs under Revive and Music Australia have advanced without commensurate state-level growth. MusicSA's Play it LOUD campaign ([link](#)) maps these gaps clearly, including shortfalls in First Nations pathways, regional investment, skills development, workforce capacity, and access and inclusion.

Without stronger bridging between state and federal funding - and greater equity in access to both - South Australian artists and industry professionals remain siloed from national opportunity.

## **South Australia in the next national cultural policy**

### Support for Music Australia

The establishment of Music Australia under Revive was a landmark achievement for the sector — one MusicSA actively advocated for and continues to strongly support. Music Australia is delivering strong and essential outcomes for Australian contemporary music: supporting export pathways, driving industry development, providing strategic coordination across the sector and amplifying the voice of Australian music on the international stage. These outcomes cannot be taken for granted. Continued, certain and adequate federal funding for Music Australia is essential to sustaining and building on this work. The next Cultural Policy should:

- Provide sustained multi-year funding certainty for Music Australia beyond the current Revive term, with funding commensurate with the scale of the contemporary music sector.
- Embed a formal delivery partnership framework between Music Australia and the AMIN bodies, with contractual recognition of state and territory music organisations as the primary local and regional delivery infrastructure for national programs.
- Ensure Music Australia's mandate extends to equity of access and inclusion, diversity and dedicated support for grassroots, independent and emerging contemporary music.

### State and Territory Peak Bodies — A Case for Federal Investment

State and territory peak music bodies are not peripheral to Australia's national music ecosystem — they are its local delivery engine. Organisations like MusicSA operate at the intersection of national policy ambition and community-level action. We deliver the professional development programs, industry networks, career pathways, audience development initiatives and advocacy that no national body can replicate with local depth and trust.

Yet the state and territory peak organisations are funded almost entirely by state and territory governments, despite delivering outcomes that are clearly national in character and benefit. This creates a structural vulnerability: when state funding is constrained, the national ecosystem disconnects. It also creates inequities between jurisdictions, with artists and industry professionals in smaller states and territories accessing fewer resources than their larger state counterparts.

The next National Cultural Policy must explicitly recognise and address this structural gap:

- Establish a federal co-investment model for state and territory peak bodies, acknowledging their critical role in delivering national music policy priorities at the local level.
- Provide dedicated federal operational funding to peak bodies in each state and territory, supplementing (not replacing) state investment, to ensure baseline capacity across the national network.
- Formalise the role of the peak bodies in the design, delivery and evaluation of federal music programs, ensuring that national investment reaches artists and communities in every jurisdiction.

### Education and Pathways

The Australian music industry continues to face critical skills and labour shortages, and South Australia is no exception. Reduced vocational and tertiary education pathways, a significant mid-career gap across music industry occupations, and limited visibility of the industry as a viable career destination for young people compound these pressures.

Music education is a powerful lever that sits across multiple government portfolios — arts, education, vocational training and youth. Yet in practice, these portfolios rarely work together. Music educators, vocational training providers, industry bodies and government arts agencies operate in silos, producing fragmented pathways and missed opportunities. Deliberate cross-portfolio collaboration between Arts, Education, and TAFE and VET providers would produce significantly better outcomes for the sector — creating coherent pipelines from school-based music education into vocational training, industry entry and sustainable career development.

Young people's relationship with music must be understood beyond their role as future workers or consumers. Investment in youth participation — as artists, audiences and emerging industry professionals — is investment in Australia's cultural, education, workforce, wellbeing and social connection infrastructure. This requires dedicated programs that make the music industry visible and accessible: all-ages events, high school music programs, youth-led event teams, affordable ticketing, and regional and outer-suburban touring all play a role.

Music Education can be more fully imbedded into the next national cultural policy by:

- Fast-tracking investment in music industry skills development programs
- Establishing formal cross-portfolio collaboration between Arts, Education and TAFE/VET providers to develop a national music education and career pathways strategy
- Recognising *A National Plan for Young Australians and Music 2026–2036* as the national youth music framework informing the next National Cultural Policy
- Recognising music as a core component of Australia's cultural and creative industries workforce pipeline, and embed music career development explicitly within education, national skills and workforce strategies

- Funding dedicated youth music education and career pathway programs, including mentoring, workplace learning, industry placements and practical careers education
- Treating youth music participation as part of Australia's cultural, education, workforce, wellbeing and social connection infrastructure

### Structurally invest in Live Music

South Australia continues to experience venue and festival cancellations and challenging business settings. Live music is one of the most visible elements of the music industry, involves most Australians in one capacity or another, and serves as an engine room that drives strong outcomes. Support for live music needs to be broad and be available for all parts of the ecosystem, not just the high-profile and most commercially viable elements.

Support for more localised regional engagement, pathways and touring must be embedded into the next policy with a focus on networking, skills development, industry development and higher profile live music outcomes at the grass roots level.

MusicSA is supportive of exploring reinvestment mechanisms linked to major live music events and stadium-scale touring activity, ensuring that a portion of revenue generated at the top end of the market is reinvested into the broader music ecosystem. This may include state-based trusts, venue-linked levies, or nationally coordinated approaches, provided funds are transparently reinvested into artists, grassroots live music, industry development and local music communities.

Future policy support must:

- Lock in Revive Live funding ongoing, and widen the scope of funding for live music to be more inclusive of grass-roots and community live music activations
- Support strategies and programs that build audiences for live music and enable stronger regional connections and industry development
- Take into account and moderate investment to mitigate the constant headwinds that impact live music viability, including insurances and skills and workforce development
- Research and evaluate reinvestment mechanisms linked to major live music events and stadium-scale touring activity to reallocate revenue back to grassroots artists, venues and industry development programs.

### **Conclusion**

Australia's music industry is a proven cultural and economic powerhouse but its sustainability and growth depends on policy that invests in the full ecosystem, not just its most visible peaks.

For South Australia, and for regional and smaller-state communities across the country, the next National Cultural Policy represents a genuine opportunity to address structural

inequities, underfunded state peak bodies, fragmented education and career pathways, a pressured live music landscape, and limited access to pathways and national opportunity.

MusicSA calls on the federal government to use this policy moment to embed music as a sustained national priority: funding Music Australia with certainty, co-investing in the state and territory infrastructure that delivers national outcomes locally, building coherent pipelines from education into careers, and ensuring an ecosystem that better nurtures the grassroots communities and artists that make it possible. A thriving national music industry is built from a strong foundation and the next cultural policy must reflect that.