



Submission to the National Cultural Policy

Submitted by: Green Music Australia

May 2026

Who We Are

Green Music Australia is a not-for-profit organisation working to reduce the environmental impact of the music industry and harness its cultural influence to drive climate action. Operating at the intersection of culture and environment, we support artists and industry workers with the tools, confidence and platforms to champion solutions and engage audiences in building a just and liveable future.

Executive Summary

Music is central to Australia's identity. It deepens cultural expression, connection, resilience and creativity, and uniquely, it has the power to move people toward the collective action our climate-challenged future demands.

As Australia's most accessed and widely participated art form, music holds immense cultural and social value. It plays a key role in shaping our sense of self, fostering belonging and bringing people together. Live music experiences create spaces that transcend the everyday, where friendships are formed, strangers become audiences, and audiences become communities.

In 2022, 91% of Australians aged over 15 listened to recorded music, while half of the population attended live music events or festivals. Additionally, 3.5 million (17%) Australians actively created music themselves.¹ These figures reflect music's unmatched reach: its ability to drive participation in the arts, strengthen social connection, and unite people across communities and generations. It is precisely this connective power that makes music, and the grassroots networks that sustain it, so critical to Australian cultural life.

Beyond its cultural and social significance, a thriving music sector contributes to a healthier, more resilient and economically robust nation. Creative Australia's report *The Bass Line: Charting the economic contribution of Australia's music industry*² found the sector generated \$8.78 billion in revenue and contributed \$2.82 billion in direct gross value added to the Australian economy in 2023-24, with exports contributing an estimated \$975 million, demonstrating both national value and global demand.

¹ Creative Australia: National Arts Participation Survey, https://creative.gov.au/sites/creative-australia/files/documents/2025-03/NAPS-2022_Fact-Sheets_Artform_Music.pdf

² Creative Australia: The Bass Line: Charting the economic contribution of Australia's music industry, <https://creative.gov.au/research/bass-line-charting-economic-contribution-australias-music-industry>



The success of *Revive* – including the establishment of Music Australia, which has strengthened investment pathways for artists, the music industry and communities – demonstrates what coordinated National Cultural Policy can achieve. But that foundation is under threat from a challenge the policy has yet to fully reckon with: climate change.

Climate Action and Music

Climate change has already significantly impacted our live music sector and will only become a greater threat if left unaddressed. Extreme weather events, rising operational costs and increasing disruption to festivals, venues, and touring are placing growing pressure on artists, audiences and organisations across the sector.

Without coordinated action, these impacts risk undermining the long-term ambitions of the National Cultural Policy, including efforts to strengthen cultural participation, support artists and creative workers, and build adaptable cultural infrastructure. At the same time, there's a significant opportunity to embed sustainability and climate leadership within Australia's cultural future, positioning the arts as a powerful driver of public engagement, community resilience and societal change.

Australia's climate has already warmed by 1.5°C since 1910, according to CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology³. The 2025 National Climate Risk Assessment⁴ further highlights that climate change poses systemic risks across Australian society, including disruptions to First Nations communities and knowledge systems, infrastructure, health and social systems, and the broader economy.

These risks directly interact with the foundations of cultural practice. A stable climate underpins all five pillars of the National Cultural Policy; *First Nations First*, *A Place for Every Story*, *Centrality of the Artist*, *Strong Cultural Infrastructure* and *Engaging the Audience*. Climate change threatens culturally significant landscapes, sacred sites and the liveability of remote communities, while also disrupting artists' livelihoods, cultural infrastructure, audience participation and the continued creation and sharing of Australian stories through increasing extreme weather and climate related disruptions.

³ Bureau of Meteorology, State of the Climate 2024, <https://www.bom.gov.au/weather-and-climate/past-weather-and-climate/state-of-the-climate-2024/report-at-a-glance>

⁴ Australian Climate Services: National Climate Risk Assessment, <https://www.acs.gov.au/pages/ncra-systems-risks>



These impacts are already being felt across the live music sector. Green Music Australia's 2025 *Rain, Heat, Repeat*⁵ report found that 85% of festival-goers experienced severe weather at music events, with 34% of audiences becoming more cautious about purchasing tickets and 13% attending fewer events altogether due to climate-related risks.

Climate change is not only an environmental or economic issue, but a cultural one. Addressing it requires shifts in values, behaviours, and collective action. Artists and cultural workers are uniquely positioned to shape public attitudes, while festivals, venues, and cultural organisations provide trusted, scalable platforms to model and embed sustainable practices at a community level.

Recommendations

[Building on our 2022 submission](#), and endorsing this year's [submission from Creative Climate](#), Green Music Australia puts forward four key recommendations to strengthen the arts sector's role in climate action, supporting a resilient, innovative and inclusive cultural system.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen First Nations leadership in climate and cultural policy

As the original custodians of Country, First Nations leadership must be central to Australia's climate response. This means giving First Nations self-determined authority to lead dedicated investment in community-led initiatives, Care for Country, and the protection of cultural knowledge systems.

Recommendation 2: Increase dedicated climate investment for the arts and music sector

Establish a dedicated funding stream within Creative Australia, allocating a minimum of 10% of core funding toward long-term decarbonisation and climate adaptation initiatives – enabling practical emissions reduction across the sector, from sustainable events and low-carbon touring to waste reduction and energy efficiency, while supporting organisations leading climate programs and advocacy.

Recommendation 3: Sustain Australia's grassroots music infrastructure

Small-to-medium organisations and independent artists are not just the foundation of Australia's music ecosystem, they are its most powerful connective tissue. It is through this distributed network that climate values, stories and behaviours travel deepest into communities. Sustained operational funding, targeted support for regional and grassroots activity, and dedicated climate resilience investment will

⁵ Green Music Australia: Rain, Heat, Repeat Report, https://www.greenmusic.org.au/green_music_australia_release_rain_heat_repeat



keep this network strong and ensure music remains a vehicle for the collective action climate demands.

Recommendation 4: Establish a National Culture and Climate Taskforce

A new National Culture and Climate Taskforce needs to be created, co-chaired with First Nations leadership, to unite government, artists and industry to coordinate climate action across festivals, venues and touring – developing a Culture Climate Charter informed by a national audit, with shared pathways for decarbonisation, adaptation and resilience, and centralised environmental data to drive consistent, sector-wide emissions reduction.

Green Music Australia welcomes the opportunity to further contribute to discussions on the National Cultural Policy.

Sincerely,



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