

**Submission in response to the  
Australian Government's public consultation paper  
"Towards a new National Cultural Policy"**

**Australasian Music Publishers' Association Limited (AMPAL)  
22 May 2026**

AMPAL represents around 60 music publishing companies across Australia and New Zealand. Our members range from major global publishers to small independents, but they all share one purpose: to protect, promote and license the work of songwriters and composers. Music publishers invest in songwriters, both economically (including advances, royalties and other payments) and more holistically in the way they work with songwriters creatively, and are committed to developing their export potential. Collectively, our members help thousands of Australian creators earn a living and take their music to the world.

AMPAL welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the next National Cultural Policy and build on the momentum of *Revive*. Targeted investment through Music Australia has already demonstrated how strengthening industry capability, export development and creator support can deliver measurable outcomes for Australia's music ecosystem and global cultural presence. As this policy evolves, music publishing must be recognised as essential cultural infrastructure - enabling the creation, protection, export and long-term value of Australian music.

Behind every successful Australian recording is a songwriter and a composition. Music publishers ensure those works travel, generating export income, opening international opportunities and creating long-term value from Australian intellectual property. They ensure songwriters are paid, rights are protected and Australian repertoire is discoverable both locally and globally. For many, music publishing income is the difference between sustaining a creative career or leaving the industry altogether.

Recent industry analysis in *The Bass Line II* shows that the composition, songwriting and music publishing subsector generated an estimated \$488 million in total revenue in 2024–25, including \$124 million in export revenue - the strongest proportional export growth of any music subsector. Sustaining this growth requires coordinated policy settings across culture, trade, education and taxation.

*This submission is to be read together with the joint submission led by APRA AMCOS on behalf of the broader music industry, to which AMPAL is a signatory.*

### **Pillar 1 | First Nations First**

AMPAL supports policies that elevate First Nations voices and reflect the diversity of Australian storytelling.

#### **Cultural rights and control**

Music publishing plays a critical role in safeguarding cultural rights and ensuring creators retain control over how their works are used and shared.

AMPAL supports stronger Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protections to ensure First Nations creators maintain authority, attribution and cultural control over how their works are accessed, licensed and commercially used.

## **Pillar 2 | A Place for Every Story**

Australian music publishing supports songwriters from every community, genre and region.

### **Access and participation**

As discovery and participation increasingly move online, policy settings must ensure regional and remote creators can access the same education, mentorship and market development opportunities as those in metropolitan centres. This includes culturally and linguistically diverse creators, creators with a disability, LGBTQIA+ creators and other underrepresented voices. Digital-first initiatives can help bridge these gaps and strengthen participation in Australia's cultural economy nationwide.

## **Pillar 3 | Centrality of the Artist**

For songwriters to sustain careers, rights must be enforceable, transparent and fairly remunerated across all platforms.

### **Strong rights frameworks**

As the industry evolves through streaming, creator platforms and AI, robust rights frameworks remain essential to ensuring creators are recognised and paid.

Policy should prioritise:

- Licensing-based approaches in digital and AI environments
- Strong copyright protections for human creators
- Fair remuneration mechanisms
- Transparency in datasets used to train commercial AI systems.

AMPAL maintains that licensing frameworks, not broad copyright exceptions, provide the strongest foundation for sustainable innovation, investment and creator remuneration. Without these foundations, the long-term viability of Australian songwriting is at risk.

AMPAL also encourages greater recognition of (and opportunities for) Australian composers, songwriters and music publishers within screen and cultural funding frameworks.

## **Pillar 4 | Strong Cultural Infrastructure**

Music publishing is core industry infrastructure. Investment in rights management, licensing systems and dispute resolution strengthens the entire music value chain.

### **Metadata and rights systems**

Australia should prioritise nationally aligned metadata and rights infrastructure to improve attribution, reduce disputes and support accurate royalty flows globally. When ownership data is inaccurate or incomplete, creators lose income and disputes increase. Investment in interoperable systems is essential to ensuring Australian works are discoverable, attributable and fairly remunerated.

### **Sync and licensing growth**

*The Bass Line II* highlights synchronisation (that is, music used in audiovisual productions) as a rapidly growing and strategically important revenue stream. Its survey data indicates a significant increase in synchronisation income for composers, from 7% of total income in 2024 to 36% in 2025, reflecting the growing role of Australian music in screen content, advertising and games. This underscores the central role music publishers play in securing and negotiating these opportunities.

## Workforce and capability

Australia's future cultural capacity depends on investing in the next generation of music publishing professionals, rights managers and creative entrepreneurs. AMPAL supports industry-led pathways that connect emerging music publishers and songwriters with practical education, mentorship and professional development.

International models such as [Music Publishers Canada NXTGen Program](#) demonstrate the value of accessible, intergenerational networks in building capability and export potential. AMPAL is exploring a similar initiative through its proposed UP (Up-and-coming Publishers) Forum - connecting emerging music publishers and students with mentorship and practical training across copyright, royalties, metadata and licensing. These pathways must remain accessible to regional and remote participants through digital and hybrid delivery.

## Policy levers

Examples of policy settings that could strengthen the sector include:

- Expanding live music tax offsets to include publisher and songwriter investment
- Introducing enhanced deductions for songwriter advances
- FBT exemptions for creative businesses
- Treating grants as non-assessable income or providing clearer offsets
- Prioritising bilateral tax reform on copyright royalties
- Exploring targeted income offsets for new Australian works
- Supporting export investment incentives for publishers.

## Pillar 5 | Engaging the Audience

Audience discovery is increasingly shaped by platforms, algorithms and global competition. Policy should:

- Ensure Australian works are discoverable and fairly monetised
- Support global export pathways
- Encourage responsible use of music by brands and platforms
- Support music publisher-led trade missions and international partnerships
- A sustainable music publishing ecosystem is closely tied to the health of Australia's live music sector, with performance royalties remaining an important income stream, particularly at grassroots level.

## Conclusion

Australian songs are amongst our nation's most powerful cultural exports. Music publishing underpins this impact, by delivering three essential outcomes: permission, protection and payment.

Australia has the opportunity to be a global leader in music publishing, exporting not just songs, but sustainable creative careers. Ensuring music publishers, and the songwriters and composers they represent, share in the value being created will be critical to realising that opportunity. A strong music publishing sector is essential to ensuring Australian stories are protected, discoverable, exportable and sustainably monetised for future generations.

AMPAL thanks the Australian Government for the opportunity to make this submission.

Damian Rinaldi, Chief Executive Officer

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