

Submission to Revive: Australia's National Cultural Policy

REGIONAL & REMOTE MUSIC SUMMIT

music**NT**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Regional & Remote Music Summit acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of the lands and communities across Australia.

We recognise the enduring connection between music, Country and culture, and acknowledge the leadership of First Nations artists and communities across regional and remote Australia.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES, HOME TO 28% OF AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION, ARE CENTRAL TO THE NATION'S CULTURAL LIFE

Across regional Australia, music is integral to community life and plays an important role in social connection, identity and participation.

Australians in remote areas are more likely than those in major cities to attend arts events to socialise and support their wellbeing.

Around half of our music festivals take place outside metropolitan centres, and more than a quarter of musicians live in regional and remote areas.

Community radio is also predominantly regional, supporting music discovery, participation and local voices across the country.

Despite this activity, investment in regional and remote music remains fragmented.

Policy and funding frameworks continue to prioritise music city and night-time economy models, where success is measured through economic growth and audience numbers. These measures do not account for how music creates value across dispersed communities.

In regional contexts, value is generated through participation, collaboration, shared infrastructure and local networks.

This submission is informed by evidence gathered through the Regional & Remote Music Summit, which brings artists, industry, policymakers and communities into conversation about how music is created and shared across regional Australia.

The Summit has identified the following barriers affecting regional music across the country:

- Gaps in infrastructure, including venues, rehearsal spaces, studios, transport and production equipment
- Precarious workforce pathways, with limited access to training, paid roles, consistent employment, career progression and mentoring
- Distance and restricted mobility, limiting touring and access to industry networks and markets
- Heavy reliance on local artists, community champions and unpaid or informal labour

- Limited integration of music within broader social infrastructure, including health, education and community services
- Climate impacts increasing costs, disruption and risk for live music activity

Together, these pressures drive workforce precarity, burnout, and a continued reliance on informal labour.

Regional artists are often the most exposed, facing higher costs, fewer sustainable career pathways, and limited access to infrastructure and audiences.

These challenges are compounded by broader economic and global forces that are felt more acutely outside metropolitan centres. Rising living costs, insecure and seasonal employment, climate disruption, the concentration of digital platforms, and limited transport connectivity all undermine the viability of regional music ecosystems.

Without coordinated, on the ground support, these conditions will continue to limit participation, artist careers and audience development.

PLACE-BASED INVESTMENT IN MUSIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Sustained, place-based investment delivers more effective and equitable outcomes than short-term project funding.

Programs such as Arts Council England's *Creative People and Places* demonstrate the long-term impact of partnering with communities to resource local people, networks and cultural infrastructure that delivers year-round music activity.

In addition to physical assets, cultural infrastructure must include the people, networks and resources that enable music creation and connection within and across regions.

Venues, rehearsal rooms, festivals, community radio stations and digital platforms rely on interconnected networks of artists, presenters, producers, music development organisations, educators, local media and touring circuits to function together and reach audiences.

THE REGIONAL & REMOTE MUSIC SUMMIT

“There really is no other music conference in Australia that truly reflects the Australian music community, culture and industry” - 2025 Summit Delegate

Since 2024, the Regional & Remote Music Summit has grown into a national platform for regional music policy, industry development and cross-sector collaboration that strengthens regional music ecosystems across Australia.

Established by MusicNT, the Summit is funded by the Australian Government through Music Australia, in partnership with state and territory governments. It's delivered through the Australian Music Industry Network (AMIN), with the event moving across regions to engage local communities, amplify regional and remote voices, and respond to the realities of making music outside metropolitan Australia.

To date, the Summit has engaged:

- 410+ delegates
- 97 speakers
- Over 150 participants in two Regional Roundtables in Darwin and Byron Bay with
- Representation from every Australian jurisdiction through matched state and federal travel bursaries supporting regional and remote participation

SUMMIT OUTCOMES

- Funding from Music Australia to support the Summit
- Changes to the Contemporary Music Touring Program guidelines to improve regional and remote access and equity
- Investment in the Australian Music Touring Network
- Matched funding for regional and remote travel bursaries
- Funding of the Northern Territory Trade Missions Program to export NT artists and industry

AUSTRALIAN MUSIC TOURING NETWORK

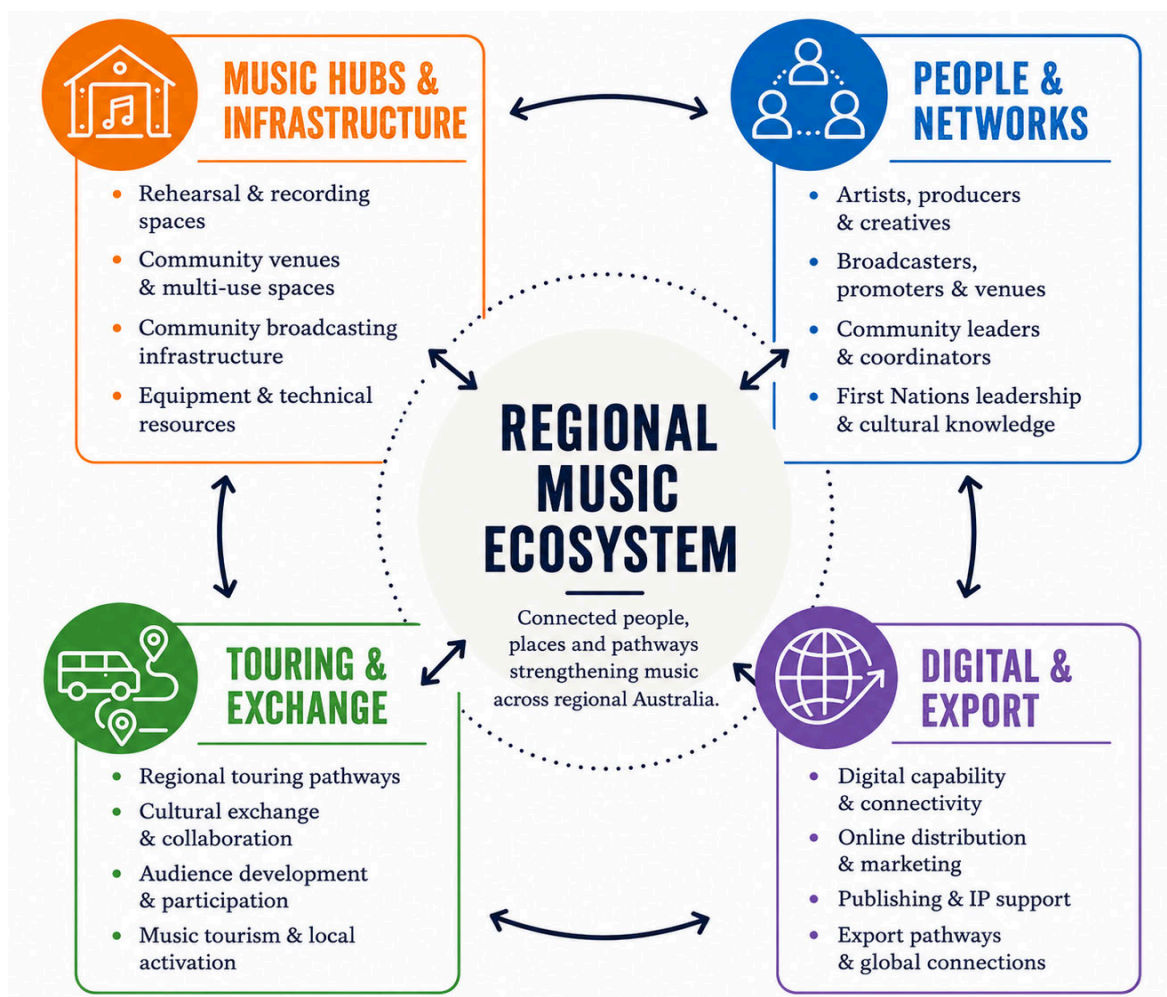
A new touring initiative supported by Music Australia and delivered nationally through AMIN, the Australian Music Touring Network is an online mapping tool developed by MusicNSW to strengthen regional touring infrastructure, develop new touring pathways, and create greater opportunities for artists to tour across regional Australia.

It also provides a framework for coordinated investment in touring routes, venue networks and reciprocal exchange opportunities, helping to support emerging artists and expand regional touring activity

REVIVE THROUGH A REGIONAL & REMOTE LENS

Revive Pillar	Regional & Remote Music Lens	Key Gap / Opportunity
First Nations First	Music is deeply connected to Country, culture and community leadership	First Nations-led infrastructure, governance and long-term cultural development to support local capacity, cultural authority and community-led outcomes.
A Place for Every Story	Music is often created and shared through informal, community-led and multi-use spaces	Current policy settings prioritise metropolitan and venue-based models that do not reflect regional participation
Centrality of the Artist	Regional artists contend with geographic isolation, limited infrastructure and smaller industry networks	Investment in regional career pathways, touring and exchange opportunities are critical to improve retention and expand market access.
Strong Cultural Infrastructure	Regional music depends on people, networks and shared community infrastructure alongside physical spaces.	Workforce, coordination and local roles need to be recognised and funded as essential infrastructure.
Engaging the Audience	Community radio, touring and digital platforms are central to music discovery and participation.	Regional audience development and community media infrastructure require greater national investment and coordination.

NATIONAL DELIVERY



Revive’s investment to date has largely prioritised industry development, market growth and export opportunities, alongside music venues and festivals through *Revive Live*.

While these priorities are important, less attention has been given to the regional systems that support cultural participation and local economies, limiting opportunities for artists and the growth of culture outside major cities.

A national program for regional music should respond to local conditions through four integrated streams.

1. Music Hubs & Infrastructure
2. People & Networks
3. Touring & Exchange
4. Digital & Export

The program would be delivered through 3–5-year funding cycles, with targeted investment in regions and local delivery

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below are informed by the Regional & Remote Summit and build on the objectives of *Revive* to invest in the people, infrastructure and networks that enable music creation and connection across Australia.

MUSIC HUBS & CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Establish a national network of regional music hubs

Provide multi-year operational support for hubs anchored in community radio stations, local music organisations and multi-use cultural spaces that enable participation, production, digital connectivity and coordinate touring activity.

Strengthen community broadcasting and digital capability

Recognise community radio and digital broadcasting as core cultural infrastructure through investment in local production capability, music curators, digital upgrades and broadcast capacity across regional Australia.

Deliver National Live Music Regulation Reform

Inconsistent planning, licensing and environmental regulation continues to create barriers for live music venues and events, particularly for small and regional operators.

The Australian Government should work with state and local governments to support nationally aligned live music regulation reform and local capacity-building models.

PEOPLE & NETWORKS

Invest in local people and networks

Fund regional roles such as producers, regional coordinators, broadcasters and First Nations music rangers to strengthen local music ecosystems and connect artists, audiences and opportunities across regions.

These roles could be embedded within regional music hubs, community radio stations and state music development organisations to support long-term sector coordination and local capacity building.

“Be the change. Touring regionally adds to the culture. You don’t have to play the big rooms. Just play the good ones”

- Matt ‘Magpie’ Johnston (Dashville)

TOURING, EXCHANGE & PARTICIPATION

Build regional touring pathways and cultural exchange

Strengthen and better align touring infrastructure and investment, including the Australian Music Touring Network, Contemporary Music Touring Program (CMTP) and Regional Arts Fund, to reduce cost barriers and increase artists touring and cultural exchange.

Activate music-led tourism and music trails

Support regional music trails and place-based music tourism initiatives that strengthen local identity, connect communities, grow audiences and generate local economic benefit.

DIGITAL & EXPORT

Provide equitable access to market pathways

Ensure regional artists have access to distribution, publishing and export opportunities that diversify income streams and support sustainable careers without needing to relocate to metropolitan centres.

“The biggest challenge facing regional and remote music today is the level of opportunity and exposure regional artists have.” - Angus Field, 3% in The Music

CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY

Invest in climate-responsive regional music activity and infrastructure

Climate-responsive regional music activity can integrate adaptive touring models, shared risk mechanisms, emergency preparedness and resilient local infrastructure, ensuring regional music communities can continue operating, recover from disruption and remain culturally and economically viable under increasing climate pressures.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

A national program for regional music should recognise that resilient music ecosystems are sustained through people, relationships and local leadership, alongside the need for accessible physical infrastructure.

- Multi-year funding cycles (3–5 years) to provide continuity and stability
- Place-based investment tailored to the needs of regional and remote communities
- Local delivery through regional music organisations, community radio stations and cultural hubs
- Integrated support across participation, workforce development, infrastructure and artist pathways

- Support for regional coordination, cultural exchange and community-led activity
- Co-investment across federal, state and local government
- Alignment with regional development, tourism, education and wellbeing outcomes

WITH COMMUNITY, NOT FOR COMMUNITY

“There is space for all of us in music”

- Rhoda Roberts AO

Regional music development is most effective when initiatives are developed with communities, rather than delivered to them.

Long-term investment would enable regions to build local capability, leadership and continuity through trusted community-based organisations, local workers and regional networks.

In New South Wales, MusicNSW piloted a Regional Music Officers program in 2019, which expanded into a statewide network of locally embedded coordinators who support artists, venues, partnerships and industry development across regional NSW communities.

In the Northern Territory, MusicNT's Remote Music Rangers program employs community-based, Indigenous-identified workers across remote communities to

support local musicians, deliver events, mentor young artists, maintain instruments and equipment, strengthen production skills, and support cultural recording and preservation.

These models demonstrate the importance of local roles in increasing participation, supporting artists and cultural continuity, developing workforce capability, and connecting regional and remote communities.

CONCLUSION

Regional music ecosystems do not operate at the scale, density or resourcing of metropolitan centres, nor should they be expected to.

Across regional and remote Australia, music is created and shared through community networks, local leadership and place-based cultural activity that plays a vital role in participation, identity, wellbeing and local economies.

If *Revive* is to deliver on the ambition of “a place for every story, a story for every place,” the next phase of investment must respond to how culture is created and valued outside metropolitan Australia.

This requires long-term investment in the people, infrastructure and local capacity that enable regional music communities to create, connect and participate.

The Regional & Remote Music Summit demonstrates the need and opportunity for a more coordinated national approach that brings communities, industry and government together to strengthen regional music ecosystems across Australia.

Music is more than an industry. It is essential social infrastructure and should be recognised and invested in for its social, cultural and economic value.

CONTRIBUTORS

This submission is jointly presented by MusicNT and MusicNSW, and authored by Laura Harper, Executive Producer of the Regional & Remote Music Summit (2024–25).

It draws on the knowledge and experience of artists, broadcasters, producers, community organisers, researchers, venues, festivals, policymakers and regional music communities from across Australia who have contributed to the Summit and its associated consultation processes.

Founded by MusicNT, the Regional & Remote Music Summit is supported through co-investment from the Australian Government through Music Australia and partnering state governments.

We thank Music Australia and the governments of the Northern Territory,

New South Wales and South Australia for their partnership and investment, along with our sponsors and supporters.

The 2026 Summit will take place in Mount Gambier on the Limestone Coast from 28-30 October and we invite you to join us.

We want to shout-out the many grassroots communities, artists and local organisers who continue to create spaces for music and community across regional and remote Australia.

FURTHER READING

- ❖ Regional & Remote Summit Event Report, Byron Bay 2025
- ❖ NSW Roundtable Report 2025
- ❖ Future of Community Radio Report, 2025
- ❖ Regional & Remote Summit Event Report, Darwin 2024
- ❖ NT Music Industry Roundtable Report, 2024

CONTACT

For more information about the Regional & Remote Music Summit, visit: regionalmusicsummit.com

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