

**SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY
REVIEW**

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**THE ROLE OF AUSTRALIAN SCREEN
COMPOSERS IN NATIONAL CULTURAL
POLICY**

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INTRODUCTION

My name is Bryce Jacobs. I am an Australian composer, producer, orchestrator and musician originally from New South Wales, currently based in Los Angeles, where I have worked professionally across film, television, songs, video game scoring, artist collaboration and production music for the past eighteen years.

I studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, earning a Bachelor of Music in Performance and a Master of Music in Composition, and am currently undertaking a doctorate while also serving in both virtual and in-person lecturing roles at various points throughout the year.

After moving to the United States in 2008, I entered the film music industry through Hans Zimmer's Remote Control Productions, initially as an intern before working my way into professional composing and music production roles alongside internationally established composers and creatives.

Over the years I have worked across major studio productions, independent productions, orchestral recordings, artist collaborations and screen music production in Los Angeles, while continuing to maintain strong ties to Australia and the Australian composing community.

I am writing this submission in support of broader recommendations being put forward by the Australian Guild of Screen Composers (AGSC) and APRA AMCOS, particularly regarding Australian content requirements, intellectual property protection, composer inclusion and AI protections within the screen industry.

I also wish to provide perspective from the position of an Australian composer who has spent nearly two decades working inside the realities of the international screen industry, particularly Hollywood.

AUSTRALIA PRODUCES WORLD-CLASS COMPOSERS

Australian composers are highly capable, internationally respected and fully competitive on the world stage. The issue is not a lack of talent. The issue is structural positioning.

Countries such as Canada and several European nations have built screen incentive systems that strategically support and prioritise their own creative workforce, including composers. Australia, by comparison, still allows many productions receiving Australian taxpayer-supported incentives to bypass Australian composers entirely, even on Australian productions.

This creates a damaging contradiction.

If Australia does not consistently back its own composers domestically, it becomes substantially harder for international productions and studios to perceive Australian composers as central creative voices within the global industry.

COMPOSER INCLUSION CREATES ECONOMIC MULTIPLIERS

Including Australian composers within meaningful Australian content requirements would not only support composers themselves, but would generate substantial downstream economic activity through recording studios, musicians, orchestrators, engineers, music editors, copyists and post-production infrastructure.

Screen music is not an isolated role. It is an ecosystem.

In a significant number of cases, internationally structured screen music agreements generate long-tail revenue for composers through royalties and backend participation, including outcomes that can extend into substantial ongoing income over the lifecycle of a project.

In the context of large-scale international productions that service the Australian screen industry, upfront composer fees can frequently reach six-figure levels, with overall lifecycle participation in some cases extending into seven-figure outcomes. These earnings are fully taxable within relevant jurisdictions and therefore represent a meaningful component of broader creative-sector economic activity.

When Australian composers are excluded from ownership or participation structures, the broader Australian screen ecosystem also forfeits associated long-term cultural and economic returns that would otherwise circulate through recording, performance, post-production and related creative industries. Ultimately, if Australians are not the ones doing (or being properly credited and paid for) this work, Australia also misses out on substantial tax revenue generated by high-value jobs within the creative sector.

Australia already possesses internationally respected facilities, musicians and creative talent. With stronger structural support for composers, there is enormous opportunity to further develop Australia into a globally competitive screen music hub.

Australia has the talent to compete globally. What is currently lacking is policy alignment that properly reinforces and protects that talent.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIAN COMPOSERS

One issue I believe deserves particular attention is the tendency for Australian composers working internationally to become culturally disconnected from the Australian industry conversation.

This is counterproductive, and in a number of ways, damaging.

Australian composers working abroad are not separate from the Australian industry. In many cases, they become valuable extensions of it.

Those working internationally develop relationships, experience, and insight into how major productions, studios, and decision-makers operate at the highest levels. This knowledge can be brought back into the Australian industry to help strengthen pathways, collaboration, and opportunity for both current and future generations of Australian composers, where there is already a strong and emerging cohort of talent within Australian training and academic environments.

Australia should not view international experience as a departure from Australian cultural identity, but rather as an expansion of Australian creative influence globally. There is far greater long-term benefit in building stronger bridges between Australian-based composers and Australian composers working abroad than in maintaining outdated divisions between the two. Australian composers form a closely connected professional community, irrespective of geographic location, with ongoing professional and creative exchange across both domestic and international contexts.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

I strongly support recommendations surrounding intellectual property retention and protection for Australian creators.

Increasingly, Australian composers working on international productions are being required to sign agreements governed under foreign copyright systems that permanently transfer ownership of their intellectual property overseas, even when those productions benefit from Australian government incentives or offsets.

This is not simply a creative issue. It is an economic issue.

When Australian-created intellectual property is transferred offshore indefinitely, Australia loses long-term revenue participation, taxation benefits and ownership of culturally significant creative works.

If Australian public funding and incentives are supporting productions, then Australian creators should not simultaneously be stripped of all ownership protections connected to the work they create.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CREATIVE PROTECTION

I also strongly support urgent protections surrounding artificial intelligence.

AI training clauses are already appearing within composer agreements in Australia. In some cases, creators are being asked to permit their music, stems, and creative materials to be used to train future AI systems capable of replicating or replacing aspects of their own work.

Of particular concern is that similar contractual approaches have also emerged from major American-based companies, suggesting an early-stage testing or normalisation of such clauses across jurisdictions, including potential implications for how they may be adopted in other markets in the future.

I have made the Society of Composers and Lyricists (SCL) aware of these developments, as well as the U.S. Copyright Office, given the potential implications for authorship, consent, and intellectual property protection.

Without clear protections, transparency and consent structures, this poses an enormous threat not only to composers, but to the sustainability of creative industries more broadly. Australia has an opportunity to act proactively in this area and establish protections that respect creators, authorship and intellectual property before harmful practices become normalised industry-wide.

AUSTRALIAN COMPOSERS AS A CONNECTED GLOBAL WORKFORCE

As has often been observed within international screen production environments, including a direct remark from composer Hans Zimmer during my time working in close collaborative proximity with him that “Australians will do so much with so little,” Australian creatives are widely recognised for their ability to deliver high-level output within constrained resources.

In practical terms, this reflects a broader professional culture among Australian composers of adaptability, efficiency, and collaborative problem-solving that translates strongly within global screen production contexts. In my experience working in major production hubs such as Los Angeles, this reputation is consistently evident when working alongside Australian composers and musicians.

This dynamic strengthens rather than fragments the Australian composer community, which is better understood as a connected global network rather than a geographically bounded one. Australian composers working both domestically and internationally operate as part of a continuous professional ecosystem, where international experience, relationships, and practice inform and strengthen domestic creative capacity. Australia has historically benefited from outward-facing cultural and educational frameworks that enable this flow of expertise, and in this context, internationally based Australian composers should be understood as an extension of Australia’s creative capability rather than as a separate cohort.

This global positioning also creates practical production advantages, including the ability to operate across multiple time zones in a near-continuous workflow model, while maintaining direct familiarity with major studio expectations and development processes in international production centres such as Los Angeles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I support the recommendations put forward by the Australian Guild of Screen Composers and respectfully encourage the Federal Government to consider the following priorities in shaping future policy:

- Ensure Australian composers are formally recognised as key creative contributors within Australian content definitions, tax incentive frameworks, and Screen Australia assessment processes.
- Formally classify composers as Above-the-Line creatives within Screen Australia production and budgeting structures.
- Recognise Australian composers working internationally, including those based in major production hubs such as Los Angeles, as an integral extension of Australia's screen music sector. This cohort provides direct access to global production networks, studios, and decision-makers, and their inclusion in Australian-supported screen work strengthens international connectivity, industry outcomes, and visibility across the broader Australian composer community as a connected global network.
- Structure Australian screen funding and tax incentives to encourage deeper creative integration of Australian composers within productions, preferably as lead composers, or otherwise through co-composition, shared scoring responsibilities, or embedded roles within compositional teams.
- Protect Australian intellectual property rights in all productions receiving Australian taxpayer-supported incentives or offsets, ensuring that public funding does not contribute to the transfer of long-term creative ownership offshore.
- Continue and expand initiatives such as the Australian Music Production Fund to strengthen domestic screen music creation, employment, and the use of Australian musical talent across screen productions.
- Establish clear, enforceable protections preventing the unauthorised use of Australian creative works, including music, stems, and underlying materials, for artificial intelligence training, requiring explicit consent and a licensing framework that provides for both upfront payment and ongoing remuneration to original creators.

CONCLUSION

Australia has already produced composers, musicians and creatives who have succeeded at the highest levels globally. With stronger structural support and long-term policy vision, the country can build a far stronger and more sustainable future for the next generation of Australian storytellers and composers.

The recommendations being proposed are practical, achievable, and designed to strengthen economic outcomes, creative employment, and long-term cultural value within the Australian screen sector. Most importantly, they would help ensure that Australian creative talent is not simply developed locally, but also retained, respected and empowered internationally.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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