

Submission to Creative Australia Revive Policy May 24, 2026

This submission largely considers the pillar: **The Centrality of the Artist**, with a focus on *musicians*. The following stated facts are drawn from my 15 years of independent research of Australian musicians and the musically educated. Key observations have also been drawn from 36 years' experience as a freelance international musician, music educator (including 26 years in tertiary education), Creative Australia and Arts Queensland peer assessor, and Chair of the Australian Women in Music Awards (7 years).

In the wake of Covid, it is common knowledge Australia has since experienced closed venues, cancelled festivals, and defunded performing arts groups. The population of professional musicians in Australia has thus decreased to numbers not seen since before Expo '88 (Throsby & Petetskaya, 2024). Furthermore, double the previous amount of musicians post-tertiary training are exiting the profession earlier than usual to retrain for non-arts roles, of which two thirds are female. Such musicians are citing the above reasons, including barriers to employment such as closed networks, lack of available opportunities, and nominal pay. Where early career musicians find employment traction during their undergraduate degree, momentum after graduation is now too slow and quit within five years. Those wishing to extend their professional development, within Australia and abroad is now beyond realistic owing to the economic crisis.

Musicians (45%) who aim to supplement their income with teaching are experiencing declining employment as the confluence of ATAR subject scaling favouring non-arts at the detriment of arts humanities subjects, the STEM and AI rhetoric, and economic and geo-political uncertainty has ensured that children learning music (instrumental and classroom) has been significantly discouraged by parents. The profession, be it portfolio-oriented or otherwise, is simply not seen by society as viable and unfortunately there is now much evidence to confirm this is actually the case.

Future generations of cultural practice and appreciation is further undermined by the reduced hours of pre-professional teacher music training, and a reduction of music curricular from primary through to secondary education. Likewise, owing to recent international student visa conditions budgets have been slashed in tertiary education resulting in reduced or cancelled delivery of professional music training programmes.

The future of Australian culture is at a point of imminent crisis. Ignoring these problems will result in ossification of current art forms, cultural decline, and a deskilled workforce. Therefore, we need to create policy and legislation that:

- Increases pre-professional primary teacher music training to minimum 30 hours per degree.
- Mandate music curricular is embedded early and in an ongoing fashion throughout primary and secondary schooling.
- Further and significantly fund instrumental music education in all public and private schools.
- Create incentives for universities to retain and grow their music and music-related degrees.
- Mandate state-related College of Teachers recognise instrumental music education as a core curriculum subject to enact accredited Bachelor of Instrumental Music Education degrees.
- Offer specific mentored **emerging artist only** grants through Creative Australia that enable further training, access to venues, experienced musicians, and opportunities (people, place and prospects). Currently this does not exist.
- Establish mandatory quotas of human musicians, for example, in music theatre pits to offset AI and other [technology initiatives destroying culture](#)
- Urge the Live Performance Australia organisation to raise award wages, and pass legislation mandating all hirers of musicians must oblige to the LP award or face penalties.
- Create an advertising campaign that raises the profile of the professional musician, and offer incentives for businesses and venues to employ live music and/or repurpose non-leased venues as performance spaces.