

National Cultural Policy Submission

Thank you for undertaking this review of the National Cultural Policy.

I am a composer, musician (double bass), producer, music curator and live music advocate.

I have lived in Sydney since 1981 and have made my living in the capacities listed above since then.

I have curated many live music performances in that time for now-defunct venues such as Winebanc, The Astral Bar, and ones that are still current, such as Sundays at the Eveleigh Hotel, and The Starfish Club, a monthly concert held in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs on the first Monday of every month. We are now in our 30th year! I think I would have easily put on more than 800 performances in that time.

I strongly support the idea of the 5 pillars, however I will limit my comments to the last three as regards Music as I feel that I have the most experience in those areas, starting with:

Centrality of the Artist:

We must protect the composer's copyright, -

AI Platforms need to acknowledge their sources, credit the artist, and pay them a royalty.

The statutory 1% cap on commercial radio royalties under the Broadcasting Services Act should be repealed; it is inequitable and has been the subject of long-standing APRA AMCOS reform advocacy.

We should be supporting Australian Artists performing at big sporting events; that is an opportunity lost.

We need local content quotas for Australian music on all broadcast platforms, including streaming services.

Artists would benefit from a dedicated tax offset. Recommendation 1 of the 'Am I Ever Gonna See You Live Again?' parliamentary report calls on the Australian Government to investigate the potential benefits of a tax offset for the live music industry. Musicians are among the lowest-paid workers in the country — this structural inequity should be acknowledged and addressed.

Establish a program for entertainment vouchers — Recommendation 7 of the same parliamentary report calls on the Australian Government to assess the viability of a rebate or voucher scheme to incentivise audiences to attend live music. Such a scheme should be open to audiences of all ages and not restricted by age demographics.

Establish a Venue Viability Fund with Matched Funding to stimulate and grow the live music scene, including matched wage support for artist fees — consistent with the funding streams proposed in Recommendation 5 of the same parliamentary report.

Strong Institutions:

Transparency is key. Strong cultural institutions depend on clear governance standards, accountable decision-making, and public confidence in how funding is allocated.

Providing investment across as broad a section of the musical ecosystem as possible, and supporting a wide variety of genres and musicians, is key to a healthy culture, particularly for genres historically under-represented in funding allocations.

Reaching the Audience:

You can't be what you can't see.

More Australian music on TV and radio.

Encourage women (identifying) only workshops/gigs/programs. There is a yawning gap between the genders as represented in the Music Scene.

An annual Sydney International Jazz Festival to bring our local musicians into contact with and be stimulated and inspired by musicians/artists from overseas.

Thank you again

Sincerely,

Jonathan Zwartz

Double Bassist, Composer, Improvisor, Music Curator

APRA Writer Director Board Member (submitting in a personal capacity)

ARIA Award Winner