



ARIA HipHop and RnB Advisory Group Revive Submission

Background

In 2023 ARIA undertook steps to engage more closely with the HipHop and RnB communities. Following this consultation, the ARIA HipHop and RnB Advisory Group was formed, and a strategy developed. The strategy followed four pillars:

1. **Advocate:** Give a greater voice to the genres at a national level, working with all levels of government and media to shift the narrative in a positive direction.
2. **Showcase:** Celebrate the amazing culture and work in the genres by finding further opportunities to showcase at existing and new ARIA events and platforms.
3. **Educate:** Develop greater opportunities for growth through sessions with industry leaders and experts.
4. **Consult:** Critically, ensure lines of communication between ARIA and the communities are always open for constructive conversation and insight.

The following submission was developed by members of the group and endorsed for submission by the co-chairs.

Members

Name	Company
A'col Ajaar Apollo (Pookie)	
Ali Tomoana	Soul Has No Tempo
Austin Benjamin (Trackwork)	Utility
Ben Martin	Island
N'Fa	BMAA
Hau Latukefu	
Jelal Edmonds	New Levels
Kween G	
Matthew Craig	AUD\$
Mohamed Komba (co-chair)	Sayless
Nina Agzarian	NLV Records/Self
Petrina Convey	
Sosefina Faumoli	
Vyviene Abla	
Julia Robinson (co-chair)	ARIA

1. The Missing Middle

Problem

There is currently significant support for emerging or grassroots artists as well as established commercial acts. What is missing, however, is sustainable infrastructure for the “working artist middle class.” Anecdotally, the average lifespan of the independent creative is three to four years before burnout occurs and they leave the creative space completely.

Solution

Establishment of a National Creative Infrastructure Program. What's missing is a tangible pathway for development. In sports there are clear pathways for identifying and developing talent, and ways in which that growth can be tracked. In music, we don't have that. We rely too often on someone having a distant connection to an established manager or industry figure who, if they have the time and resources available, can nurture that talent. This means every year the majority of artists fall through the cracks. This is not due to lack of talent but lack of infrastructure.

We need to fund, support, and empower whole ecosystems around the artist rather than just the artist themselves. That is how we will build infrastructure and creative pathways. Rather than emerge in isolation, artists come from the strength of the communities they are involved in: independent studios, community creative hubs, grassroots media platforms, rehearsal space, mentorship ecosystems, culturally significant organisations etc. We can then develop a growth framework and KPIs on how accountability would be tracked.

This would operate in a similar way to how Olympic athletes are supported by the AIS, as an example. This would significantly strengthen the domestic creative scene as well as ensure sustainability into the future.

2. Youth Engagement / Prevention Through Culture

Problem

Youth policy and arts policy are still too separated. We know that creative engagement contributes to preventative intervention, identity development, community building, mental health support, pathway creation, and more. Yet we still treat it as extracurricular, entertainment, soft, optional.

Solution

Embed Creative Programs into Youth Development & Community Safety frameworks. This could include a range of support such as music mentoring programs, studio-based engagement, artist-led workshops, cultural leadership pathways, creative entrepreneurship training. Especially in outer suburbs, multicultural communities, and regional areas across the country.

3. Creative Careers need Business Education

Problem

Many artists fail not because they lack talent but because they lack business literacy, marketing skills, understanding of contracts, rollout strategy, and sustainable career education. We develop talent reasonably well. We do not develop independent business capability within the space particularly well. A lot of knowledge is held by those who have achieved success focused on attaining a bigger piece of the pie rather than growing the pie for all to eat from.

Solution

Develop nationally supported, practitioner-led, creative career programs focused on entrepreneurship, industry literacy, wellbeing, and long-term sustainability. If we were able to remunerate experts for their time and expertise in paying it forward, this would prevent a scarcity or competitor mindset. This would then create a healthier, more self-sufficient, and globally competitive Australian creative sector with stronger long-term artist retention.

ABOUT ARIA

The Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) is a national industry association with more than 100 members representing major and independent record producers, manufacturers, and distributors. ARIA acts as an advocate for the Australian music industry, administers the labelling code of practice, and compiles industry information and research. It also produces the ARIA Charts every week and the annual ARIA Awards. Most importantly, ARIA supports Australian music and creates opportunities for it to be heard.

We acknowledge First Nations people as the Traditional Owners and sovereign custodians of the lands on which we work and live. We recognise their continuing connection to Country and their respective nations across this continent and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We also celebrate the unique and inspiring creativity and songlines of the world's oldest living culture and give thanks for the immeasurable influence First Nations people continue to have over the music and art we all enjoy.