



Towards a New National Cultural Policy: Public Consultation (2026)
Submission by the Digital Media Association

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Digital Media Association (DIMA), the trade association that represents the world's leading audio streaming companies. DIMA's members, which include Amazon Music, Apple Music, Spotify, and YouTube, make it possible for music fans to legally engage with music whenever and wherever they want, and for artists to reach and grow their fan base more easily than ever before.

We applaud the Australian Government for seeking input from across the spectrum of stakeholders as it develops a new National Cultural Policy. Music streaming has revolutionized the global music industry, including the market in Australia, in a way that has extraordinary benefits for music fans, music creators, and a variety of other participants in the music economy. As a result, we believe our members' perspective is vital and welcome this opportunity to be a part of the dialogue.

In its prior National Cultural Policy, the Australian Government explained that one of its goals was to "ensure that Australian music remains visible, discoverable and easily accessible across platforms to all Australians, driven by a vibrant, agile, sustainable and globally facing local music industry."¹ As briefly described below, the work our members are doing underpins – and makes possible – this goal in at least the following key ways:

First, music streaming revived the fortunes – and viability – of an industry that had seen years of steady decline. Due to the impact of piracy, as well as the changing nature of consumption in the digital age, the traditional record industry model – based on the sale of physical products – collapsed in the first decade of this century. Globally, the industry reached its nadir in 2014, generating less than \$14 billion in revenue that year.²

The introduction and widespread adoption of music streaming models rapidly turned the record industry around. Many music fans around the world chose our members' offerings over unlicensed, free alternatives and industry revenues doubled over the next decade, reaching \$31.7 billion in 2025.³

¹ *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*, at 87 (available at <https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-culturalpolicy-8february2023.pdf>).

² IFPI Global Music Report (2026) at 7 (available at <https://www.ifpi.org/resources/>)

³ *Id.*

These global trends have held true for Australia, whose local record industry also saw a period of decline, but has since experienced years of steady growth thanks to the advent of streaming.⁴ Streaming is incredibly popular among Australians: According to a recent report issued by Music Australia, “[n]early three quarters (72%) of Australians used an online music streaming service in 2025,”⁵ and, as of last year, subscription streaming accounted for 71% of revenues for Australia’s recorded music market⁶.

Second, this growth has overwhelmingly benefited the people who create music and the rightsholders that represent them. Music streaming services share approximately 70% of their revenue with music rights holders. This is in sharp contrast with traditional radio broadcast models, which in Australia have single digit royalty rates for the use of music.⁷ We are not aware of another music distribution model that provides a higher share of the revenues generated from consumers than music streaming services do.

Third, streaming services are notable for offering access to *virtually all the world’s music*. Unlike radio stations, music streaming services do not have limited air time, and there is no program director who will choose which songs get airplay and which don’t. Instead, listeners can select whatever they’d like to hear. And unlike record stores, streaming services have unlimited shelf space. Streaming services can and do provide access to virtually every sound recording that has ever been commercially released.

As a result, the barriers to entering the marketplace that were common in the era of radio station playlists and CD sales simply do not exist in the streaming age. Anyone with access to a computer can find a way to release their music, and that music can similarly be found by anyone who seeks it. A recent report by Creative Australia underscores the value of streaming to Australian music creators and fans, reporting that “Australian music is considered *easily accessible* by most of the music-engaged,” and that “Australian music is part of the music diet” of virtually every “music engaged” person who responded to their survey.⁸

Similarly, anyone who wants to encourage fans to listen to the music of a particular artist, genre, region, or anything else, can use streaming services to do so. To take just one example, the recent Ausify campaign explicitly “encouraged Australian listeners to deliberately search for local artists and become more conscious and regular consumers of

⁴ <https://www.aria.com.au/industry/news/recorded-music-grows-in-2025>.

⁵ Music Australia, *The Bass Line* (2d ed.) at 46 (available at <https://creative.gov.au/research/bass-line-charting-economic-contribution-australias-music-industry#the-bass-line-2nd-edition>) (hereafter “*The Bass Line* 2d ed.).

⁶ <https://www.aria.com.au/industry/news/recorded-music-grows-in-2025>.

⁷ See <https://www.pcca.com.au/news/ppca-recognises-the-copyright-tribunal-of-australias-ruling-on-new-radio-broadcast-licence-rate> (citing sound recording rate of .55%); <https://www.apraamcos.com.au/music-licences/select-a-licence/tv-radio-licences> (citing rates of .054% to 3.76%).

⁸ Creative Australia, *Listening In: Insights on music discovery and engagement* (2025) at 5 (available at <https://creative.gov.au/research/listening-research-series>) (emphasis added).

Australian music,” a program that, according to Music Australia, “coincided with an 86.2% increase in the number of Australian songs included in the Triple j Hottest 100 countdown.”⁹ In the prior era of truncated radio playlists and limited shelf space, such a campaign would have faced overwhelming obstacles, if it would have been possible at all. But in the context of streaming, anyone can mount a campaign to encourage people to seek out and listen to music of a particular artist, genre, or region, or by any other criteria at all.

Similarly, unlike the pre-digital model of music distribution, music creators now have immediate access to a truly global audience. This has worked to the benefit of Australian music creators, who “perform well internationally” on streaming services, often seeing significant streaming income from foreign markets.¹⁰ In fact, according to one report, Australia is the eighth largest exporter of music in the world, with the top importer of its music being the United States, the largest music market in the world – a fact that is made possible by music streaming services and the open digital markets for musicians.¹¹

Fourth, streaming services work hand in hand with local music creators and rights holders, investing considerably in local markets throughout the world, including Australia. This takes many forms, including supporting local music festivals, developing tailored playlists, working with music creators and rights holders in local markets, and otherwise serving as valuable members of the local music ecosystem.

Finally, any cultural policy focused on music must recognize that streaming services are the end point of the supply chain. With only the rarest of exceptions, music streaming services do not make or otherwise commission the music they distribute. Instead, music streaming services have commercial relationships with record labels and distributors, and it is those labels and distributors that select and develop artists, create and record the music, prepare it for distribution (including assigning the relevant credits and metadata), and develop the appropriate market strategies and priorities. While revenue from streaming services makes these investments possible, streaming companies themselves do not decide what music to make or release.

In short, music streaming services develop and offer the services and tools that record labels, distributors, artists and songwriters can use to reach a global marketplace, including fans in Australia, immediately and with the lowest barriers to entry ever. There has never been a music distribution offering as responsive to the needs and desires of the cultural marketplace as those provided by our members and other music streaming services. As the government prepares its new National Cultural Policy, we would strongly encourage preservation of the open digital markets for music which have served the

⁹ The Bass Line 2d ed. at 54.

¹⁰ The Bass Line 2d ed. at 33.

¹¹ See Luminate, 2025 Year-End Music Report, at 47, available at <https://luminatedata.com/reports/yearend-music-industry-report-2025/>.

Australian music industry – and music fans – so well, and caution against any calls to intervene in that market in ways that could unintentionally limit consumer choice, hamper growth, erode affordability, or otherwise impede the success we have seen over the past decade and expect to continue into the future.

We are happy to answer any questions that may arise in the course of this consultation about the streaming marketplace, and the music industry more generally, and look forward to following your work on the new National Cultural Policy.

Graham Davies
President and Chief Executive Officer
Digital Media Association