



CHAMPIONING AUSTRALIAN CREATORS IN AN EVOLVING STREAMING ERA

**SPOTIFY SUBMISSION  
FOR AUSTRALIA'S  
NEW NATIONAL  
CULTURAL POLICY**

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# SPOTIFY SUBMISSION FOR AUSTRALIA'S NEW NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

Australia's music and broader cultural sectors play an important role in shaping national identity, driving economic impact, and connecting Australians with stories, ideas, and each other. Over the past decade, streaming has fundamentally changed how Australian creators reach audiences and how Australians discover and engage with music, podcasts, audiobooks, and other forms of storytelling.

Spotify has been part of this transformation since launching music offerings in Australia in 2012, adding podcasts in 2020, and audiobooks in 2023. During that time, streaming has helped return the recorded music sector to growth, opened new audiences to Australian artists, and expanded the number of creators able to build careers through music. It has also increased the revenues flowing back to artists, songwriters, labels, publishers, and other rightsholders, with Spotify now the music industry's all-time largest contributor of royalty payments.

We recognise that parts of the Australian music ecosystem are under pressure, with live venues in particular facing economic challenges. But the broader picture is one of growth and opportunity. Because of streaming, more artists than ever before are able to release music, find audiences, and build sustainable careers. Australian music is also reaching larger global audiences, creating new sources of income and export opportunities for artists in both English-speaking and non-English-speaking markets. As Australia's cultural economy continues to evolve, cultural policy should help ensure Australian creators, audiences, and industries all thrive in a more digital, global, and competitive environment.

The next decade will bring further change. AI tools are already expanding who can create, how content is made, and how audiences discover it. The next phase of the *National Cultural Policy, Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place*, ("Revive") should recognise both the opportunities and challenges of this shift and set a policy roadmap that supports Australian creators in a more global and digital market.

**We strongly caution against regulatory interventions that would interfere with the current rapid pace of growth of the Australian music industry.**

This submission sets out Spotify's vision for how policy can build on this current momentum while addressing emerging challenges. It focuses on how public and private sector collaboration can support a sustainable, globally competitive Australian music sector, grounded in how music and culture are created, distributed, and experienced today. It argues that long-term growth will come from expanding audiences, strengthening creator pathways, improving data and transparency, and supporting shared responsibility across government, industry, platforms, and creators. It also outlines the many initiatives and investments Spotify has undertaken in Australia to support artist careers, audience growth, live music, and long-term industry sustainability, alongside our policy recommendations for the sector.

# STREAMING FUNDAMENTALS AND THE SPOTIFY “FREEMIUM” MODEL

Spotify was founded in Sweden in 2006 at a time when music piracy had decimated the recorded music industry for over a decade and few people were paying for music. The goal was to make legal access to music easier and more attractive to consumers than unlicensed streaming and illegal downloads. **Since then, Spotify has become the world’s most popular audio streaming subscription service, with more than 761 million users, including 293 million paying subscribers, across 184 markets.**

Spotify’s approach has always been to meet consumer demand for simple, on-demand access to music and culture, while ensuring that rightsholders are compensated. We operate based on a revenue-share model. This differs from many audiovisual streaming and social media services, which typically operate through lump sum payments rather than ongoing revenue sharing. **Under this model, Spotify succeeds when artists and rightsholders succeed, because growth in listening and subscription revenues increases the royalties available to the music sector.**

For music, around two-thirds of the music revenue Spotify generates is paid to music rightsholders, such as labels and aggregators, publishers, and collective management organisations, who in turn pay to the artists and songwriters that they represent based on their contractual relationships. The remaining share is primarily used to operate and grow the service, including continued investment in features and tools that help artists connect with fans and build additional income streams, both on and off the platform.

Spotify offers listeners two basic ways to access the service: a free, advertising supported experience and a paid Premium subscription, with certain additional features available as paid add-ons. These are part of the same experience within a single app. The free tier plays an important role in introducing users to legal streaming and encouraging long term conversion into paying subscribers. A majority of Premium subscribers first used Spotify through the free tier. Paid subscriptions now represent the majority of revenue for the recorded music industry and are a key driver of royalty growth for artists and rightsholders in Australia and all around the world.

The Spotify “Freemium” model has helped expand the size and value of the music market by making legal access to music simple, accessible, and widely available at various price points. The impact of this model is measurable. Spotify has paid nearly USD \$70 billion to the music industry globally since its founding. In 2025 alone, Spotify paid more than USD \$11 billion in royalties to music rightsholders globally, the largest single-year payout by any company in music history.

Streaming, and Spotify in particular, has therefore helped rebuild the recorded music sector by expanding global audiences and encouraging hundreds of millions of listeners to pay for licensed music access, increasing revenues across the music ecosystem and contributing to more than a decade of sustained industry growth.

# THE MODERN MUSIC ECONOMY AND THE VARIOUS MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Artists today build careers through multiple revenue streams and diverse ways of reaching audiences. Success in music is no longer tied to a single distribution channel or source of income. Artists and rightsholders generate income through streaming, live performance, merchandise, physical format sales, brand partnerships, broadcasting, public performance licensing, synchronisation, and other endeavours.

The importance of each revenue stream varies across genres and stages of an artist's career. Some distribution channels generate immediate, direct revenue, often through a single transaction (e.g. a concert ticket or vinyl record purchase), while others help artists build audiences and long term fan relationships and generate recurring income over a long time. Streaming is part of this broad music economy portfolio of revenue channels and should be considered and assessed in that overall context.

**Live music is an important part of that portfolio.** For many artists, live performance is not only a key source of income, but also one of the most effective ways to build audiences and long term fan relationships. Fans who discover an artist at a local live music venue are more likely to continue to support the artist long after the show has ended; there is a direct line between live performance and streaming growth. The reverse is also true: listeners who discover an artist on streaming are more likely to seek out live performances in the future. As noted in Spotify's submission to the 2024 Parliamentary Inquiry into the Australian Live Music Industry, streaming and live music are complementary, not competing.

This is why Spotify has continued to invest in tools and initiatives that connect listeners with live music both in Australia and abroad, including event promotion, ticketing, merchandise, and concert and venue discovery. Features such as [Concerts Near You](#), [Venue Pages](#), and the [Live Events feed](#) help listeners discover artists, venues, and upcoming shows more easily. By partnering with Australian venues and promoters, Spotify helped fans purchase more than 688,000 tickets to tours and live events in Australia last year,

generating more than AUD \$70 million in ticket sales value. A third of those ticket sales were for emerging artists. We discuss these efforts further in our comments under Pillar 4 of the consultation relating to cultural infrastructure.

**The way Australian audiences engage with music has shifted fundamentally.** According to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), overall radio listenership in Australia has declined from a peak of 85% in 2017 to 66% in 2025. Over the same period, music streaming usage has grown from 37% to 72% of Australian adults, with Spotify remaining the most widely used service. **Unlike traditional broadcasting, streaming allows listeners to actively choose what they listen to and play a much more direct role in discovering new artists and music genres.** Creative Australia's 2025 Listening In study further confirms this shift: 98% of music-engaged Australians are discovering new music and new artists on streaming services, and 69% of all Australians used at least one streaming platform in 2024.

The shift is particularly evident in how Australians discover and engage with local music on streaming services. In partnership with YouGov, Spotify [surveyed](#) more than 4,000 Australians about how they discover local music on streaming services. This is one of the largest pieces of consumer sentiment research about Australian music discovery to date, offering a robust, data-driven perspective on how streaming supports local music discovery and growth with 72% of respondents believing Australian music is readily available and accessible on streaming. Around six in ten were satisfied with both the visibility of local artists (59%) and the amount of Australian content available or recommended to them (61%). On music discovery, 85% are satisfied with their ability to discover new Australian music, with almost half saying they're very satisfied.

These shifts in artist careers and audience behaviour have also changed how the health of the music sector should be measured. **In the streaming era, the health of Australian music is best understood through three broad measures: royalties generated, audiences reached, and overall consumption time.** The data across these three criteria shows continued absolute growth and strong audience engagement with Australian music on Spotify.



Spotify paid out over **AUD \$330 million** in royalties for music by Australian artists in 2025 alone, up 7% year-on-year and almost three times more than in 2017. Half of this went to independent artists. More than 370 Australian artists now generate over **AUD \$100,000** annually from Spotify alone, double the number from 2017, while more than 50 generate over **AUD \$1 million** annually, four times the number from 2017. Australian music is also reaching larger global audiences than ever before.



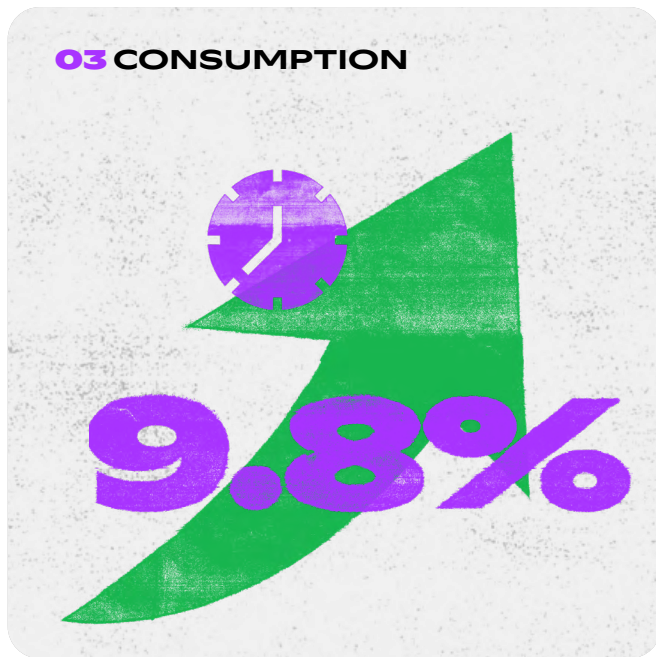
Australian artists were streamed more than 57 billion times on Spotify in 2025 and featured in more than 1.6 billion playlists globally.

This expanding international reach is undeniably opening new export opportunities for Australian artists and contributing to growing royalty revenues from audiences around the world.

When Spotify launched in Australia, the pathways available to most Australian artists were far narrower than they are today. The recorded music sector had not yet returned to growth after more than a decade of decline driven by piracy and collapsing physical sales. Few new artists were being signed by record labels, investment in songwriting was low, and for many local artists, reaching international audiences was particularly difficult. The export market remained inaccessible for most Australian artists. Then, the ability to generate revenue beyond Australia required the significant infrastructure of global record labels, complicated physical distribution avenues, and significant marketing budgets.

Today, the Australian music industry operates very differently. Both the Australian music recording and music publishing industries have experienced over a decade of year-on-year revenue growth driven by streaming. Artists can reach audiences more precisely and efficiently, and build fan bases both locally and globally from the earliest days of their careers. Australia is now one of the most export-oriented music markets in the world, with **85% of royalties** generated by Australian artists on Spotify in 2025 coming from listeners outside Australia. According to IFPI, streaming now accounts for **78.9% of Australia's recorded music revenues**, making it one of the most mature streaming markets globally.

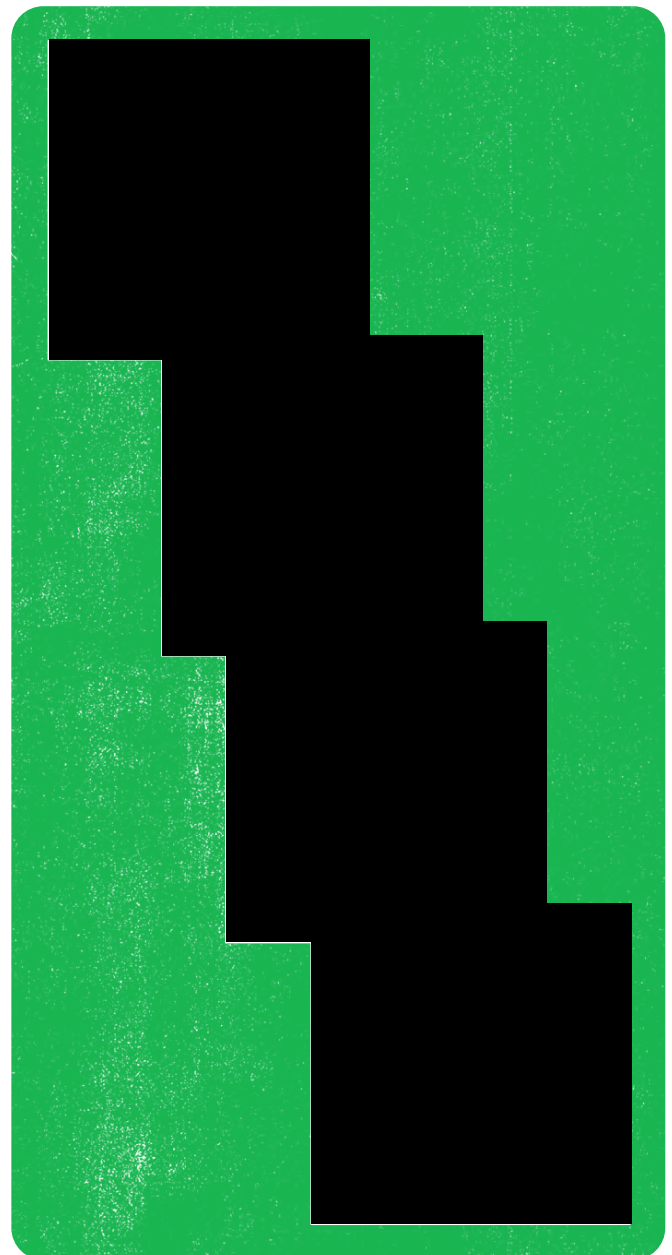
**As the Australian market matures further, Spotify sees export growth as increasingly complementary and additive to domestic success for many local artists. Reaching audiences overseas can help Australian artists build larger fanbases, diversify revenue opportunities, and strengthen long-term career sustainability alongside continued growth at home.**



The global audience Spotify brings has produced an overall increase in music consumption hours for Australian artists. At home, one of the frequently quoted statements is that Australian music is in decline on streaming platforms. This is not the case on Spotify, where both global and domestic streams of Australian music have continued to grow in absolute terms. The number of streams of Australian music in Australia has increased by **9.8%** since 2020, supported in part by initiatives such as [Turn Up Aus](#), Spotify's flagship Australian music promotion program, which is discussed further under Pillar 5.

As the Australian music sector has grown and evolved, so has Spotify's investment in Australia. Since 2012, Spotify's team in Australia has increased tenfold, with employees based across the country working directly with artists, labels, venues, and industry organisations. Our investments in local artist programs, education, editorial support, collaborations, and live music integrations reflect our belief that long-term growth in Australian music comes from helping more artists build audiences and sustainable careers. We invest in Australian artist amplification initiatives including [Turn Up Aus](#), [RADAR](#), [EQUAL](#), and [Fresh Finds](#).

These programs combine editorial support, marketing, artist education, audience insights, live music integration, and international exposure opportunities to help artists build audiences and careers at different stages of their development. Together, they represent one of Spotify's largest investments in Australian artist empowerment, local visibility, women artists, First Nations creators, and export growth into international markets. Several of these initiatives are discussed further throughout this submission.



**The success of these initiatives also illustrates a broader reality: discoverability on streaming services depends on much more than recommendation systems and content amplification efforts alone.**

Artists succeed primarily because of factors like upstream investment by labels and artists' teams in talent development, marketing, fan engagement, release strategy, touring, and how effectively artists and their teams use audience and analytics tools. **Recommendation systems respond to listener behaviour and engagement. They do not create underlying demand,** nor do they operate separately from the wider music environment around them. They cannot substitute the music industry's primary role as talent developers and demand creators.

The same Spotify personalisation systems that recommend music also surface podcasts and audiobooks, where Australian content performs strongly with local audiences. This suggests that audience demand, sectoral differences, as well as the nature of the content itself (music as opposed to spoken-word audio) play an important role in shaping discovery outcomes for English-language content.

The future growth of Australian music will come from helping more artists build audiences, develop careers, and reach listeners both locally and globally. That will depend on continued investment across artist development, professional pathways, live music, exports, and the tools and programs that help artists connect with fans. Music streaming services cannot provide all of these supports, nor is it their role to do so. At Spotify, we are enthusiastic about our partnerships with Australian artists and their industry partners, and we explain below how our voluntary activities align with and support the goals of Revive, and make several suggestions for areas meriting policy attention.

// PILLAR 1

# FIRST NATIONS FIRST

Spotify believes First Nations stories, languages, and artists should not only be supported within dedicated cultural spaces, but should also be visible and discoverable within mainstream listening environments used by millions of Australians every day.

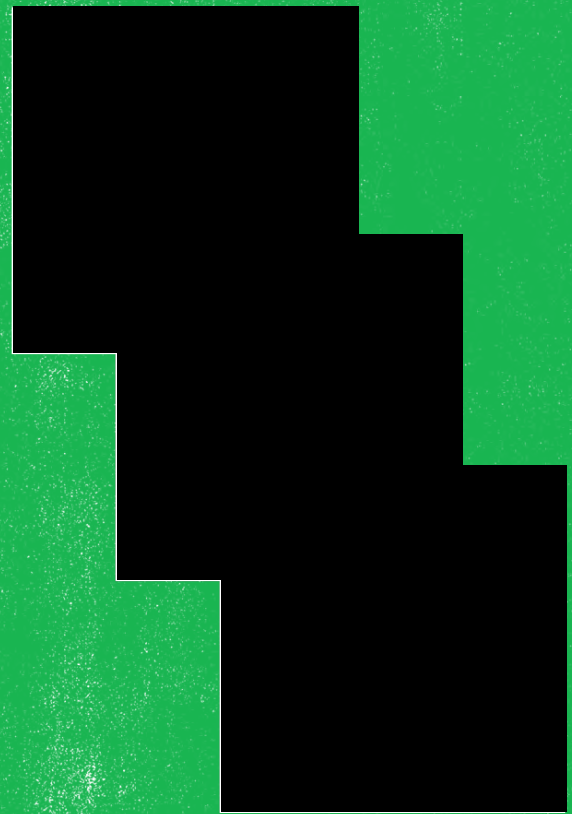
At Spotify, this approach shapes how we support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists across music and audio. Our Dreaming Loud program was developed in consultation with Dr. Alethea Beetson, a proud Kabi Kabi/Gubbi Gubbi and Wiradjuri artist and Spotify's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program lead.

We work closely with First Nations music industry professionals who curate the Dreaming Loud playlist portfolio and support the programming of First Nations artists across Spotify's broader Australian playlist ecosystem. This helps ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists are represented not only within dedicated First Nations playlists, but also across the range of Australian music discovery surfaces on Spotify.

Spotify's programs for emerging and underrepresented artists also support First Nations creators. Artists including **Baker Boy** and **Thelma Plum** have participated in RADAR and EQUAL, Spotify's programs supporting emerging artists and women and gender diverse artists. These programs provide editorial support, marketing resources, and audience growth opportunities both in Australia and internationally. Baker Boy went on to win 5 ARIA Awards the same year he took part in our program.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate how First Nations leadership, curation, and storytelling can operate within a mainstream digital platform reaching broad local and global audiences.

Dreaming Loud includes playlists such as **Blak Australia**, **Original Storytellers**, and **Deadly Beats**, which are promoted to both Australian and international audiences. The portfolio also includes music recorded in First Nations languages, given the importance of language to culture and storytelling.



## // PILLAR 2

**A PLACE FOR EVERY STORY**

**Spotify has expanded who can distribute and discover both music and spoken word content in Australia. Podcasts and audiobooks are opening new pathways for Australian authors, creators, and storytellers to reach audiences directly.**

Unlike music, which often transcends borders and languages, spoken-word content such as podcasts and audiobooks is more closely connected to language, culture, and local experiences. Digital audio is helping Australian stories reach larger audiences, while making it easier for creators across the cultural sector to share their work.

**Audiobooks**

Audiobooks on Spotify are also expanding how Australians discover and engage with literature. Spotify connects Australian and international audiences with Australian literature through a wide and growing catalogue of audiobooks. Since launching audiobooks in Australia in October 2023, Spotify's audiobook catalogue has grown from 150,000 to more than 700,000 titles, now across 22 markets. As Spotify continues to expand audiobooks internationally, Australian authors are increasingly able to reach audiences across multiple global markets through a single digital platform.

Spotify also empowers authors and their publishers with data analytics and audience engagement tools through our Spotify for Authors service. Spotify for Authors is accessible both to authors represented by established publishing houses and to independent and self-published authors. This means Australian authors at different stages of their careers can distribute their work more broadly to reach and better understand listeners across international markets wherever the Spotify audiobooks offering is available.

Australian book retail has faced growing pressure from changing consumer behaviour in recent years. Spotify's audiobooks offering is a net addition to the existing book publishing market. We have seen a **12% year-on-year increase in audiobook listeners on Spotify in Australia, and over 20% year-on-year increase in listening hours**. This consumption creates new audiences and additional revenue opportunities for Australian authors and publishers.

Our experience across multiple markets, including Australia, shows that audiobooks streaming is particularly effective at reaching younger and digitally engaged audiences who may not regularly purchase physical books or even e-books, or visit traditional bookstores. Almost half of Spotify audiobook listeners globally are under the age of 35 and for many listeners, audiobooks are becoming an entry point into books and reading rather than a replacement for any existing reading habits. In Australia, **45% of under-35-year-olds** who are eligible Premium subscribers have already tried an audiobook and **this number goes up to 60%** when all age groups are considered.

 **SPOTIFY AUSTRALIA USERS WHO HAVE TRIED AN AUDIOBOOK**



What this illustrates is that the relationship between audiobooks and traditional publishing is additive rather than substitutive.

Unlike physical bookstores, digital audiobook platforms are not constrained by shelf space or inventory limitations. This gives Australian listeners access to a broader mix of genres, authors, and forms of storytelling than traditional retail environments can typically support.

Spotify believes audiobooks streaming will play an increasingly important role in how Australian stories are discovered and experienced in the digital era. We request that this important role and contribution of our audiobooks streaming offering be adequately recognised in Australian public policy decisions around culture and consumers.

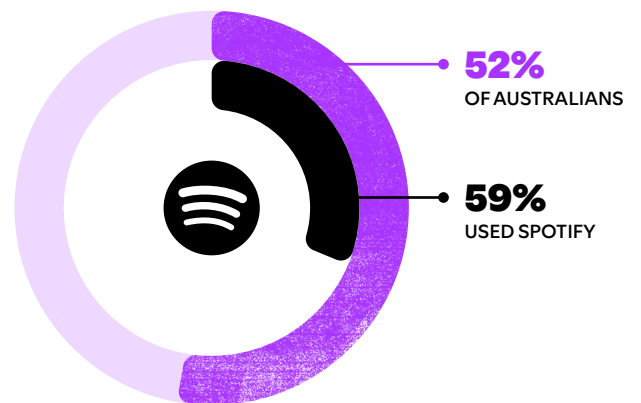


**Podcasts**

Podcasting has also become an important example of how digital audio expands participation in Australian storytelling. Podcasts give creators direct access to audiences without requiring traditional broadcast infrastructure or large-scale production resources. On Spotify, podcast distribution is available to a broad range of creators, from established media organisations and production companies to independent creators producing content on their own. This accessibility is reflected in the diversity of Australian podcasts available on Spotify, spanning sports, comedy, news and current affairs, technology, business, crime, and First Nations storytelling, among many other genres.

Podcasts are popular and Australian-made podcasts perform particularly strongly with Australian audiences. According to an Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) [study](#), **52% of Australian adults** listened to a podcast in a given week in 2025, and **59% of those listeners** used Spotify, making it the most widely used podcast platform in the country.

 **LISTENED TO A PODCAST IN 2025**



Podcasts are often closely tied to local identity, humour, language, culture, and lived experience. Australian audiences respond strongly to podcast content that reflects those experiences and perspectives. Spotify data shows Australian-made podcasts resonate more strongly with domestic audiences than podcasts from many other English speaking markets, including

the UK, Canada, and New Zealand. By this measure, Australian made podcasts perform almost on par with how domestically produced podcasts perform in the United States. Around half of the top 30 most streamed podcasts on Spotify in Australia are Australian made, according to Spotify data for April-May 2026. In addition, Australian-made podcasts dominate Australian users' listening in the Sports, Traditional Entertainment, and True Crime categories.

The success of Australian audiobooks and podcasts shows that local stories and voices can find large audiences on digital platforms. Both formats are making it easier for Australian creators to reach listeners directly, both in Australia and internationally. Spotify believes streaming will continue to play an important role in the future of Australian-spoken word storytelling, and that any future policymaking should reflect that.

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## // PILLAR 3

# CENTRALITY OF THE ARTIST

**Spotify welcomes Revive's continued recognition of the centrality of the artist as a key theme in Australia's future cultural policy. We believe that supporting artists requires practical tools, education, and direct audience engagement opportunities.**

Pillar 3 correctly recognises that artists are workers. In our engagement with artists and their teams, three priorities consistently emerge when it comes to their expectations of Spotify: they want to understand their audiences, deepen fan relationships, and turn engagement into meaningful commercial opportunities.

**Spotify for Artists** is designed to support these goals. This artist-facing service gives artists and their teams access to audience demographic, location, and engagement analytics; tools to manage and enrich artist profiles; opportunities to pitch music to Spotify's editorial teams; and marketing products that help artists reach listeners at important moments in their careers. It also supports merchandise and ticketing integration, helping artists convert audience engagement into commercial outcomes. Spotify for Artists is used every month by more than one million artists, managers, and label employees globally.

Spotify for Artists gives artists functionalities to actively shape how they present themselves on Spotify

through playlists, clips, profile content, and artist recommendations. These tools give artists meaningful agency in shaping how they develop their career and build audiences on Spotify.

We recognise that access to tools and data is only part of the equation. Artists and their teams also need the knowledge and skills to use them effectively. Spotify delivers regular masterclasses and workshops throughout Australia, helping artists and managers learn how to use Spotify for Artists tools, interpret audience data, pitch music to editorial teams, plan releases, and connect streaming momentum to touring and merchandise opportunities. Many artists, particularly those without management or label support, would otherwise have no structured way to access this information. Spotify has also supported broader music industry capability building through sponsorships and partnerships with events such as BIGSOUND and Indie-Con Australia, including masterclasses, networking events, panel discussions, and sessions featuring industry leaders and practitioners.



Our partnership with [The Push](#) further reflects this broader commitment to empowering artists through education, skills development, and long term career pathways. In February 2026, Spotify committed AUD \$200,000 and established a multi-year partnership to support The Push, Australia's leading youth music organisation. The partnership supports training and development across songwriting, production, performance, marketing, branding, and career pathways.

Last but not least, Spotify invests in programs designed to support Australian artists at different stages of their careers, from early discovery through to audience growth and international reach.

## FRESH FINDS

**Fresh Finds Australia** is often the earliest point of entry for emerging artists into the Spotify playlist ecosystem. The program helps to surface talent before they have built significant followings. Nearly 70% of all Fresh Finds streams come from listeners discovering an artist for the first time, and Fresh Finds artists on average see their new listeners and international streams more than double in the month after being added to the playlist. Royel Otis were first supported through Fresh Finds before going on to play Coachella and **now have over 8.9 million monthly listeners on Spotify, while Don West grew from roughly 3,000 monthly listeners to more than 3 million after early support on the playlist.**

## RADAR AU

The **RADAR Australia** program provides sustained promotion for artists who have demonstrated early momentum and are ready to scale their audiences. Teen Jesus and the Jean Teasers progressed from Fresh Finds into our RADAR playlist, **resulting in a 224% increase in monthly listeners and a 54% rise in followers within six months, alongside an ARIA Award for Breakthrough Artist. Globally, RADAR has now supported more than 1,000 artists across 183 countries, with participating artists accumulating 338 billion streams.**

## EQUAL

The **EQUAL Australia** program supports women and gender-diverse artists through editorial promotion, partnerships, and professional development initiatives including the EQUAL Writing Camp in partnership with Australian independent dance label, Sweat It Out. EQUAL ambassador Ninajirachi won three ARIA Awards in 2025, including the Michael Gudinski Breakthrough Artist Award presented by Spotify.

**Supporting artists also means ensuring they are properly recognised for their work. Attribution, transparency, and creator visibility have become increasingly important in the digital music ecosystem, as many contributors can be involved in creating a single recording.**

Our goal is to increase the value of digital music in the eyes of consumers. When consumers value the experience, particularly in the paid subscription tier, this directly benefits rightsholders, artists and songwriters, thanks to the revenue share model. This flow of revenue supports upstream investment across the music sector, including artist development, marketing, and creative risk-taking. To meet the moment, Spotify has invested in innovative tools and initiatives designed to recognise, identify, and showcase the creators behind the music on our platform. These features provide concrete examples of how Spotify puts into practice Pillar 3 goals of recognising the centrality of the artist.

**Song Credits**, available for every music track on Spotify, showcase the contributors behind a recording including songwriters, lyricists, vocalists, producers, engineers, session musicians, and others. This helps ensure contributors behind recordings are properly identified and credited, while also helping listeners better understand who is behind the music they enjoy. Such visibility is consequential – it creates industry recognition and strengthens the negotiating power of contributors who typically have been less known by consumers. It also matters to consumers directly – listeners on Spotify can now see who is behind the music they are listening to, at least to the extent that the underlying information was made available to Spotify in the first place (see more on this at section below).

**SongDNA** is a unique Spotify feature that [allows](#) listeners to discover music through the wider network of contributors behind a recording, not only the headline artist. Listeners can explore recordings connected to particular songwriters, producers, musicians, or engineers, creating new pathways for discovery and recognition for contributors who were previously far less visible to audiences. Millions of listeners are already using SongDNA to discover new music in this way.

Spotify has also introduced features focused on artist authenticity and AI credits. The **Verified by Spotify** badge helps listeners identify artist profiles that have

passed Spotify's authenticity and platform compliance review processes. Profiles that primarily represent AI-generated or AI-persona artists are currently not eligible for verification. Not all artists currently have a Verified badge. Verification is still being rolled out and the review process remains partly manual given the scale of uploads to streaming services. To provide listeners with additional context across a wider range of artists, Spotify is also rolling out an **Artist Details** feature in beta. Artist Details gives listeners more information about an artist, including when they began releasing music, the size of their catalogue, and whether their recordings have been playlisted by Spotify editors. **AI Credits** allow artists and rightsholders to disclose responsible AI use in the creative process, including where AI generated vocals, lyrics, or compositions contributed to a recording. The information appears alongside Song Credits and other contributor information provided by labels and distributors.

During the beta, disclosure applies to specific roles rather than to AI artist personas or entire tracks. This means listeners may be able to see when particular contributions to a recording were AI-generated, such as AI-written composition or lyrics, or AI-generated vocals. The initiative is designed to give interested listeners clearer visibility into how a track was created, including whether any credited contributions were the product of generative AI. Spotify is also continuing to support broader industry alignment, as the best long-term approach to AI labelling remains a sector-wide standard for how information on AI use is supplied to all music streaming services. An international, DDEX-compatible standard for the supply of this data would be optimal because it would reassure artists that listeners receive consistent information regardless of which service they use.

Together, these features are designed to give listeners more transparency and context around the music they are listening to.

The widespread availability of AI-powered content creation tools is already reshaping the music sector. Producing music recordings to a high standard is no longer limited to those with access to expensive equipment and extensive technical training, and songwriting is no longer limited to those with formal musical knowledge. As a result, more people in Australia and around the world are engaging in music creation, whether professionally or as amateurs, than in previous decades. As a result, the volume of music being released globally has increased significantly.

These supply-side shifts have important implications for music professionals, consumers, and cultural policy. In this context, some voices in the technology sector argue that copyright protections should be weakened or removed in response to AI. We disagree. Musicians' rights matter. Copyright remains essential. If the music industry does not help shape how AI develops, innovation will happen elsewhere without appropriate protections and compensation for artists and songwriters.

**Together with rightsholders, artists, and songwriters, Spotify is investing in AI research and product development and has committed to four [principles](#) designed to ensure these technologies put artists and songwriters first.**



**01**

Partnerships with record labels, distributors, and music publishers



**02**

Choice in participation



**03**

Fair compensation and new revenue



**04**

Artist-fan connection

We also believe that AI can present an opportunity, but only if the industry moves quickly to shape it. Fans are already creating covers, remixes, and reinterpretations of existing music at scale, and most of that is happening without artist consent, credit, or compensation. Without a rights framework in place, artists can lose control of their work and value flows nowhere.

**That's why we have announced the first of our music-sector commercial partnerships that will enable licensed creation of Generative AI music covers and remixes with full artist and rightsholders' consent, credit, and – importantly – compensation and additive value for artists and songwriters at the center.**

Together, these tools, education programs, and artist support initiatives reflect Spotify's alignment with Pillar 3's view that artists are central and deserve to be supported and celebrated. We recognise that supporting artists requires more than visibility alone. Artists need transparency, attribution, education, professional pathways, audience growth opportunities, and the ability to build sustainable careers over time.

**Spotify believes the next phase of Revive should recognise and encourage industry-led initiatives that are already delivering meaningful outcomes for Australian artists. Continued flexibility for digital services to innovate, invest, and collaborate with artists and industry partners will be important to sustaining this momentum.** Cultural policy should support an environment that encourages continued investment, partnership, experimentation, and audience growth across the music ecosystem.

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## // PILLAR 4

# STRONG CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Australia's National Cultural Policy should address the importance of both physical and digital infrastructure underpinning the creative industries, and the music sector in particular.**

In that context, we set out first how Spotify supports the live music sector given its significant importance to the professional careers of music artists. Second, we highlight the main digital infrastructure challenges which affect the music ecosystem and merit policymakers' attention in the Revive review consultation.

**Live music is important, and there is a symbiotic win-win relationship between streaming and live.**

At Spotify, we recognise that live performances are key to talent pipeline development as well as audience-building. For many artists, live performances also represent an opportunity to retain the highest share of consumer spend on music. Consumers, in turn, often place high monetary value on in-person concerts because unique, social experiences often command higher prices than recorded music.

Spotify supports the live music ecosystem through product design, industry partnerships, and voluntary artist tools that help convert on-platform listening into real-world event attendance. This support extends across the live sector, from independent venues and emerging artists to larger venues, national tours, and major events.

A key part of this work is making concerts easier for listeners to discover. Spotify integrates live event information directly into the app, helping fans see when artists they listen to are performing near them, where else they will be performing, and who will be performing at their favourite venues. We work with more than **40 ticketing partners** and offer features like **Concerts Near You** and **Venue Search** to make it easy to find shows and follow the venues fans love. We also put marketing behind artists' tours, both on-platform and off, so more fans can find shows they want to attend. To date, this work has driven more than **\$1.5 billion in ticket sales for artists**.

Spotify also helps artists address ticket scalping and secondary market price inflation. Fans First, for example, has enabled artists to offer their most engaged listeners exclusive early access to concert tickets and merchandise through targeted pre-sale campaigns. This gives artists and their teams a direct way to reach high-intent fans and support ticket sales to real fans at face value.

We recently [announced Reserved](#), a new live music experience built around a simple idea: real fandom deserves a real seat at the show. Reserved will help artists identify and reward their most engaged fans with reserved access to tickets before general sale. It is another example of how Spotify is using its platform to support both the artist-fan connection, economic growth and live music attendance. Reserved will launch this summer in the U.S., with more markets including Australia following quickly.

These initiatives reflect our view that recorded music and live music are mutually reinforcing. Streaming helps audiences discover artists, deepen fan relationships, and generate demand for live performance; live performance, in turn, strengthens artists' careers, fan communities, and the wider cultural economy.

Spotify also supports the broader live music ecosystem through partnerships and direct contributions to local organisations. For example, Spotify provided early support to the Australian Music Venue Foundation, helping fund the development of its website and visual identity during its establishment phase.

Spotify believes these contributions to live music, artist development, and audience growth should be recognised as part of the broader role digital platforms can play in supporting Australian cultural infrastructure and long-term sector sustainability.

## Digital infrastructure includes metadata and should be a priority area for the next phase of Revive.

Digital music infrastructure is not limited to the hardware and software used by streaming services. It also includes the metadata supplied by rightsholders alongside music recordings, including information about

performers, songwriters, recordings, compositions, and rights ownership.

At present, gaps and inconsistency in music metadata are one of the most significant infrastructure challenges affecting the streaming ecosystem. Music streaming is a digital business, yet recordings delivered to streaming services often contain less contributor information than physical formats such as CDs and vinyl previously carried.



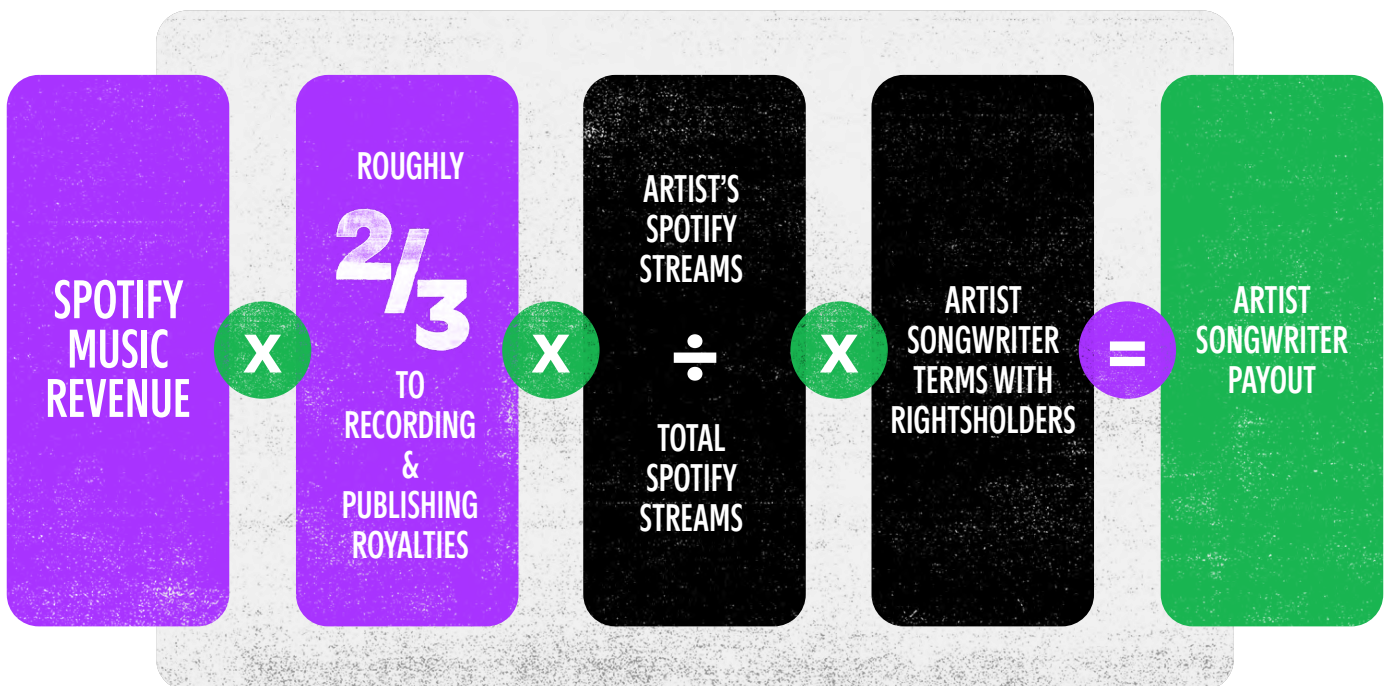
**In particular, less than 0.01% of recordings uploaded to streaming services such as Spotify are provided with both the numerical identifier of the recording and that of the musical composition whose performance is recorded on the track.**

Similarly most songwriters', lyricists', and performers' names – when provided at all – are recorded in alphabetic form rather than unique, numerical identifiers.

This matters because metadata sits underneath almost every part of the modern music ecosystem. It affects rightholders' distribution of royalty payments, attribution, discovery, licensing, reporting, search, recommendations, and increasingly, transparency around AI-generated content. The international music industry has already developed standards for how contributor and rights information should be supplied to streaming services. However, these standards are not being implemented consistently across the sector. The extent of these gaps in catalogues provided to music streaming services is evidenced by two recent UK [studies](#) based on sectoral interviews and aggregated data provided by five music streaming services, including Spotify.

These shortcomings have real consequences for artists and songwriters. Spotify pays around two-thirds of its music revenues to music rightsholders, who in turn distribute royalties to artists and songwriters using Spotify’s usage reporting data. Proper distribution depends on accurate metadata. Too frequently, gaps or inconsistencies in this information create confusion, slow down payments, or even leave royalties undistributed. Both music rightsholders and music

services have been developing workarounds to address specific pain points, but Pillar 4 should take into account the impact of metadata gaps on Australian artists and songwriters and recommend a collaborative, sector-wide process, similar to the process followed in the UK, as a concrete next step to support Australian artists and songwriters in the music sector.



### Metadata cannot be ignored, especially in the AI era.

Music streaming services’ ability to build many new products, such as Spotify’s SongDNA for example, is dependent on the availability and quality of incoming music metadata. Moreover, as the digital music market evolves and licensed generative AI music products become more common, the questions of attribution and creator compensation will not disappear – they will become the focus of sector-wide conversations, just as they did with the transition from physical to digital music distribution.

**Reliable metadata is also essential before nationality or locality could become a meaningful regulatory category in streaming policy.** As explained above,

gaps in the supply of contributor-level metadata are a known problem in the music industry. There is also no international standard for determining the “nationality” of a music recording, or for defining the nationality of an individual contributor, including whether a contributor may have more than one nationality, what evidence should be used to establish it, and which party should be responsible for verifying and communicating that information. To our best knowledge, most rightsholders and many collectives representing songwriters and composers do not systematically collect nationality information on their members and typically do not receive such information from their publishing members either.

The absence of reliable, industry-standard nationality information is a business constraint to a point. In our experience, artist nationality is not a strong preference signal for most music consumers. This observation is consistent with the finding in Music Australia's Listening In report that "51% of music-engaged respondents do not consider an artist's nationality or locality when looking for new music". However, Spotify always seeks to meet consumer preferences as closely as possible. Therefore, we want to be able to meet consumer requests for music by Australian artists if they are framed in nationality terms. In addition, we already make extensive efforts to surface locally relevant music and other content, as further described in our comments under Pillar 5 below.

### Artist origin data limitations.

Spotify uses artist origin signals and tagging to improve the quality and relevance of responses to consumer requests and editorial selection for certain local playlists. However, these practices should not be mistaken for a standardised, verified, or legally certain system for identifying the nationality of artists. There is a material difference between the practical art of tagging artists by probable nationality for internal business purposes and the level of certainty required in situations where legal compliance with regulatory mandates or financial obligations depend on the correctness of such identification.

Personalisation of music streaming experiences requires tagging content according to a wide range of criteria and cultural signals. Such internal tagging is done based on editorial judgment, our team's market knowledge, artist profile self-reporting, or other operational inputs and represents a reasonable business response for most commercial purposes, including for the purpose of trends reporting for a tagged cohort. Regulatory compliance, by contrast, requires a clear definition of the relevant characteristics and rules enabling its consistent application and auditability on different services.

Accordingly, if the next phase of Revive policy were to contemplate any regulatory obligations with respect to support for music by "Australian artists" or another "Australian" link, it would be essential to resolve two threshold issues.

- \* **First, the government would have to clearly define the relevant characteristic:** for example, whether "Australian" is intended to refer to citizenship, residency, place of birth, cultural identity, location of professional activity, record label affiliation, self-identification, or some other criterion.
- \* **Secondly, there would need to be a clear and reliable mechanism** by which that information would be provided to streaming services as standardised metadata by those best placed to collect and verify such information. This task should be placed on those closest to artists, i.e. music content providers. Without such a definition and a legally mandated delivery mechanism of verified information, any regulatory mandate would be legally unsound and could not be implemented accurately, fairly, or at scale.

Spotify and music industry partners have a joint commercial interest in meeting consumer demand where it exists. With the arrival of many AI-powered tools increasing the level of agency that consumers have, we want to collaborate with the Australian music industry to improve the extent and quality of metadata supplied to streaming services across the board.

**However, we strongly caution against suggestions that nationality-related prominence mandates are a simple concept to implement on music streaming services or that they are a measure that music services could implement on their own.**

// PILLAR 5

## ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE

**Pillar 5 raises an important question for cultural policy in the streaming era: how should Australian content be discovered by and connected with audiences in a personalised, on-demand environment?**

Unlike traditional broadcasting models, streaming services compete on their ability to help listeners surface music and audio content that is personally relevant to them. Audience engagement, recommendation systems, editorial curation, artist promotion, and listener choice all work together to shape discovery on music streaming platforms.

**Spotify believes the most effective way to strengthen Australian music and other storytelling is to grow audience interest and expand discovery pathways, rather than impose artificial listening outcomes or replicate broadcast-era regulatory models in a fundamentally different digital environment.**

It is important to situate our role accurately within the music ecosystem. Spotify, like most music streaming services, does not produce its own music. Instead, we secure non-exclusive licences to commercially released music from rightsholders across the industry. Our mission is to connect artists with listeners and persuade consumers to pay for access to licensed music and other content. This makes music streaming services fundamentally different from subscription video-on-demand services and traditional broadcasters. Spotify is not a record label, publisher, or broadcaster, and cannot be expected to perform artist and repertoire (A&R) functions or replace the role of labels, managers, promoters, and other parts of the music ecosystem.

At the same time, Spotify invests heavily in helping audiences discover music and helping artists reach listeners. These investments reflect our business strategy of creating value for consumers that is worth paying for by strengthening local cultural relevance and ensuring Spotify remains a compelling home for creators and audiences alike.

As this submission has outlined, Spotify invests significantly in facilitating Australian music discovery by consumers, live music integration, and audience growth through a range of voluntary initiatives and partnerships across the sector. Given our role in the music ecosystem, these initiatives are designed to complement, not replace, the work of artists, labels, managers, promoters, and other parts of the industry.

In the context of the Revive review, Spotify encourages policy approaches that build on and support this kind of successful voluntary collaboration across the sector, rather than create government mandates or redirect the resources of streaming companies to untested measures.

Spotify supports audience engagement and music discovery in a number of ways, both on and off the platform. The examples below illustrate how these investments help connect Australian artists with listeners at home and abroad.

# SPOTIFY'S TURN UP AUS PROGRAM

Revive's focus on how Australian stories connect with people "at home and abroad" is important. Australian music and audio reach audiences far beyond Australia, and any discussion about the future of Australian content should consider both the local and global opportunities available to creators, and the primary way in which Spotify's activities directly align with and meet the goals of Pillar 5.

## TURN UP AUS

In 2025, Turn Up Aus resulted in Australian listeners streaming Australian artists 223 million more times on Spotify than in the previous year. Turn Up Aus is built around a simple idea: long-term growth in Australian music comes from helping more listeners actively discover and engage with local artists.

Turn Up Aus reflects a significant investment by Spotify to drive organic engagement in Australia with local artists. Since the launch of Turn Up Aus in April 2025, more than 500 Australian artists have been featured on and off platform.

Turn Up Aus combines editorial promotion, playlist support, artist marketing, industry education, and live music discovery to help Australian artists connect with audiences both on and off the platform. On platform, Turn Up Aus operates through a dedicated hub, coordinated editorial support across playlists including Hot Hits Australia, Turn Up Aus, and New Music Friday, and promotional support through Spotify's RADAR and EQUAL programs.

Since the launch of Turn Up Aus:

**223M**

MORE STREAMS OF AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS BY AUSTRALIAN LISTENERS IN 2025 THAN IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR

**500+**

AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS HAVE BEEN FEATURED ON AND OFF PLATFORM

Turn Up Aus also drives off-platform engagement. A core part of Turn Up Aus is to connect artists and fans directly. It extends support for Australian artists by surfacing live events through Spotify's concert and venue discovery features, helping fans find and attend shows by the artists they stream. Top fans are invited to surprise gigs, and given a chance to engage with their favourite artists in the best setting for any live music

event – a local pub. In 2025, we held a series of these intimate live gigs for artists like OneFour, Spacey Jane and Alison Wonderland with the 2026 expansion of this program starting with Hooligan Hefs. Turn Up Aus also includes partnerships with key Australian music and cultural institutions to help drive audience engagement with local artists both on and off the platform.



### TRIPLE J ON SPOTIFY

A co-branded playlist, editorial and targeted on platform marketing which resulted in an increase in over

**120,000**

NEW PLAYLIST FOLLOWERS

**3.1M**

STREAMS

We have also now onboarded Triple J's Like A Version video franchise, which we actively promote to our user base.



### ARIA PARTNERSHIP

A partnership with ARIA with a shared goal to uplift Australian artists, driving a record year for ARIA awards ceremony engagement with over

**600,000**

OF THE

**700,000**

VOTES GENERATED BY USING OUR PLATFORM TOOLS

# SPOTIFY'S GLOBAL IMPACT REPORT

Spotify is investing in the discovery of Australian music and creative content, on and off of our platform and at home and abroad. Given the global nature of music streaming and the importance of exports, Spotify last year released an in-depth look at the landscape and the impact on streaming in our [Global Impact Report](#).

The report found that global listening for Australian music has grown significantly. Export streams of Australian artists on Spotify increased 37% between March 2021 and March 2025, with Indie Rock exports growing 94% and Indie Pop exports growing 86%. Australian artists alone were discovered by first-time listeners more than 2.7 billion times globally on Spotify. Spotify's Global Impact List for the first half of 2025 further highlights the growing international reach of Australian artists including Dom Dolla, FISHER, Ruel, grentperez, Kylie Minogue, Royel Otis, CYRIL, Adriatique, and RÜFÜS DU SOL. Some Australian artists, including Sia, Chase Atlantic, Tame Impala, and The Kid LAROI, now receive more than 80% of their streams from listeners outside Australia. In an historic first, Tones and I was the first woman in the history of our platform to reach 3 billion streams on a single track with Dance Monkey. This level of success for Australian artists is made possible by the global export of music.

Streaming and global discovery pathways are helping Australian artists build audiences well beyond traditional English-language markets, including in countries such as the Philippines, Colombia, and Brazil. They are also creating new opportunities for Australian artists from multicultural backgrounds to connect with diaspora audiences globally. Artists such as grentperez and Keenan Te reflect how Australia's increasingly diverse music scene can resonate with listeners and communities far beyond Australia itself.



Voluntary efforts of this kind reflect a broader shift in how audiences discover and engage with music on streaming services. Music streaming services are not simply content libraries. Listeners expect to discover new music that reflects their interests while also having easy access to familiar favourites. Because most major streaming services provide access to broadly similar catalogues, one of the main ways services compete is through the quality of discovery and personalisation offered to listeners.

# THE SPOTIFY PLAYLISTS ECOSYSTEM AND THE ROLE OF ALGORITHMS

For Spotify, playlists and recommendation features are some of the main ways listeners discover both new music and familiar favourites. **At the same time, the majority of listening on Spotify is initiated by users themselves, with listeners actively searching for the type of audio content they want to hear. Consequently, editorial and personalised recommendations are only one part of the broader listening experience.**

Australian artists may appear across several types of playlists and discovery surfaces, and it is important to recognise that different parts of the Spotify ecosystem are shaped by listener choice, editorial curation, and recommendation technology. Broadly speaking, Spotify playlists fall into five categories:

- 01 USER-CREATED PLAYLISTS** Playlists created by Spotify users, either individually or collaboratively with other listeners.
- 02 ARTIST PLAYLISTS** Playlists created directly by artists through Spotify for Artists.
- 03 CHARTS** Playlists driven by listener activity and streaming numbers within particular genres, countries, or time periods.
- 04 EDITORIAL PLAYLISTS** Playlists curated by Spotify's editorial teams based on music trends, cultural moments, and listening data. Spotify's local editorial team also works closely with global editorial groups to feature Australian artists on international playlists and reach new audiences overseas.
- 05 PERSONALISED PLAYLISTS** Unique playlists generated for each individual listener based on their listening behaviour and preferences.

## **Contrary to common assumptions, there is no single “Spotify algorithm”.**

Different recommendation systems operate across different listening experiences. Some combine editorial curation with personalisation signals, while others are shaped more directly by individual listening behaviour or by direct user prompts. These playlist subcategories include editorially curated personalised playlists, sometimes referred to internally as “algotorial” playlists, as well as fully personalised playlists such as Discover Weekly, Release Radar, and Daily Mix.

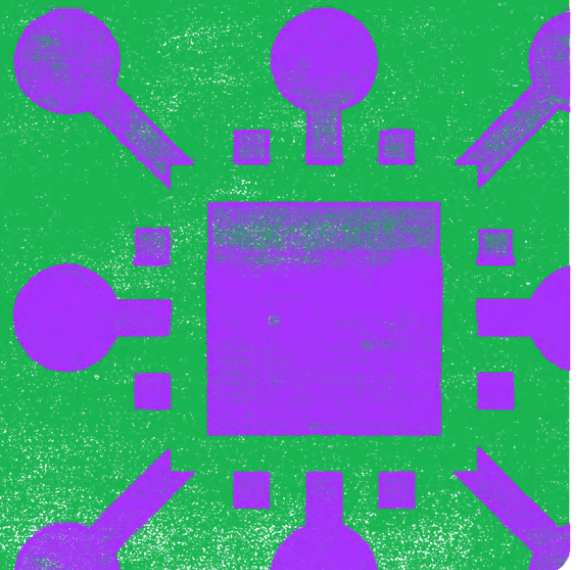
Spotify has also invested in new, market-leading discovery tools that give listeners more direct control over how algorithms work for them. Prompted Playlists, launched in Australia in February 2026, allow listeners to generate playlists using natural language prompts. For example, a listener might ask for “upbeat Australian indie music for a Sunday road trip along the Great

Ocean Road” and Spotify assembles a playlist in real time based on that request (noting the metadata limitations outlined above).

For Australian artists, these tools create new opportunities for discovery because they allow listeners to express interests in genres, moods, locations, and local music scenes directly. Over time, they may also provide a clearer picture of how audiences actively seek out and engage with Australian music.

As AI-powered discovery tools continue to evolve, the ways listeners search for, discover, and engage with music on streaming services are also likely to change quickly.

**Spotify believes policy should allow room for experimentation, innovation, and evidence gathering as these audience behaviours develop, rather than applying broadcast-era approaches to a rapidly evolving digital environment.**



One of the biggest risks for Australian music in the streaming era is the application of regulatory models designed for fundamentally different technologies, particularly broadcast, to interactive and personalised streaming services. Traditional broadcasters distribute the same program content to all listeners. Streaming services operate differently. Spotify personalises the listening experience for each user and competes on its ability to help listeners discover music that reflects their individual interests, preferences, moods, and

listening habits. Further, broadcasters operate on a fundamentally different financing model. For each song played by Australian radio stations, that station pays a single-digit royalty tariff (capped to 1% for artists and producers), whereas Spotify returns approximately two-thirds to rightsholders.

For this reason, Spotify believes cultural policy proposals should approach personalisation and discovery systems carefully.

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## **Personalisation plays a key role in consumer satisfaction, and consumer satisfaction drives willingness to pay for music streaming subscriptions.**

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In turn, subscription revenues support royalty flows back to artists, songwriters, labels, and publishers. These revenues now account for the majority of the music industry's revenue in Australia.

Measures such as mandatory prominence obligations or interventions into recommendation systems would weaken the listener experience and reduce the effectiveness of music discovery. They may also reduce competition between streaming services by pushing different services toward similar recommendation outcomes. Further, there would likely be a significant negative impact for Australian artists if other countries adopted similar obligations, thereby reducing access to those markets for Australian music.

Spotify believes a more effective approach to supporting Australian music is to strengthen audience interest in such content and expand discovery pathways that encourage listeners to engage with local music organically. This can include activities by both rightsholders and streaming companies, such

as artist development, promotion campaigns, export support, editorial initiatives, live music integration, and new discovery tools that help listeners actively seek out Australian music and creators.

Spotify's investments in discovery pathways, including editorial programming, concert discovery, AI DJ, and Prompted Playlists, are intended to support this kind of audience-led engagement. These tools increasingly allow listeners to express what they want directly, including interests in Australian artists, genres, communities, and local music scenes.

At the same time, these technologies are evolving rapidly. AI-powered discovery tools are likely to change significantly over the coming years, along with the ways audiences search for, discover, and engage with music. Spotify therefore believes policy should allow room for continued experimentation, innovation, and evidence gathering as these audience behaviours and technologies continue to develop.

# CONCLUSION

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Spotify welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Revive review consultation and shares the Government's ambition to ensure Australian stories, artists, and cultural experiences continue to thrive at home and abroad.

We are proud of our role in meeting this ambition, including as the single largest payor to the Australian music industry and of the success of Australian content on Spotify, both in Australia and around the world.

Streaming, personalisation, and AI-powered technologies are reshaping how Australians create, discover, distribute, and engage with culture. These changes bring challenges, as well as create significant new opportunities for Australian artists and creators to reach audiences efficiently, precisely, and at a scale that was not previously possible.

Across music, podcasts, and audiobooks, we see that cultural participation is expanding and that the measures of success for Australian content are changing. In music, success can no longer be understood only through domestic visibility or airplay. Royalties generated, audiences reached, export growth, and long-term fan engagement are now equally important measures of how Australian culture travels and sustains itself in a global digital market. These are what lead to sustainable careers for artists and creators.

The submission has also argued that long-term growth in Australian culture will come from expanding audiences and strengthening creator pathways, not simply redistributing existing attention. Australian artists and creators increasingly succeed through a combination of talent development, education, live performance, audience engagement, digital tools, marketing, and export opportunities. Recommendation systems are one part of that wider ecosystem, not a substitute for it.

This is why Spotify has focused its investments on empowering music, podcast, and audiobook creators through access to tools and data analytics, education, First Nations-led curation, and extensive collaboration with local creative sectors to help artists and storytellers build sustainable careers over time. These investments reflect our belief that digital platforms can help more Australian stories reach more audiences, both locally and globally.

Spotify also believes that supporting Australian culture is a shared responsibility across government, industry, creators, educators, platforms, and audiences themselves. The next phase of Revive should therefore encourage collaboration, innovation, and long-term investment across the cultural sector, while recognising how audiences engage with culture in practice and where the primary responsibility for demand creation lies.

Spotify is proud to work with Australian artists, authors, podcasters, publishers, labels, educators, live music stakeholders, music organisations, and audiences.

**We believe the future of Australian culture will be strengthened by policies that expand participation, support creators, improve transparency and metadata, encourage exports, and help Australian stories continue reaching audiences in Australia and around the world.**