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NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY SUBMISSION – SOUNDS AUSTRALIA

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Investment in contemporary music needs a permanent seat at the budget table alongside screen and collecting institutions. It requires deeper engagement, smart cross government portfolio policy and industry government co investment. The last decade has shown the breadth and depth of export ready Australian talent. This is a moment in time to realise the future opportunity of Australia's contemporary music export and to supercharge our talent pipeline.

As one of the fastest growing global industries at the forefront of community, innovation and economic growth, Australia is primed and has the potential to go from a music nation to a music powerhouse as we collectively strive to become a net exporter of music.

The export opportunity for the Australian music industry over the coming decade is significant, with Goldman Sachs predicting a booming decade for the music industry, with total music revenue to double to about \$131 billion by 2030. The company's annual "Music in the Air" report states that the global music market (recorded, publishing and live) rebounded strongly in 2021, up 34% year over year on previous estimates, driven by a strong return of live events, the accelerated adoption of streaming and the resurgence of physical sales.

There are three key areas of export support that if adopted will provide game changing results for the Australian Music Industry, made up of talented creators, specialised crew and born global professionals and entrepreneurs.

Increased and guaranteed investment in Sounds Australia

**Creation of a dedicated Commonwealth Music Export
Development Fund**

**Visa Reform – Improving Australian artist mobility to the
United States of America**



Increased and guaranteed investment in Sounds Australia

Based on experience and a proven track record in successfully connecting the local music industry to global opportunities, Sounds Australia has strategically crafted a framework of unique support mechanisms to facilitate the fast-tracking of Australian Music Export.

Since inception Sounds Australia has:

- Attended 244 international showcase conference festivals. This includes 82 different events, held across 73 different cities in 26 countries.
- Promoted 1,991 Australian showcasing artists, with 442 of those acts having showcased at multiple events.
- Produced 272 showcasing events, which have provided 2,211 unique performances and opportunities to be seen.
- Delivered 207 networking events, managed 44 Trade Stands, presented 28 Australian Music Market focus panels and delivered 14 Educational Webinar/ Panels.
- Provided 19,735 dedicated meeting connections for Australian industry whilst attending overseas market events.

Showcases, B2B networking events, digital initiatives, capacity building and inbound export activity are the tools and devices that feature in Sounds Australia's export program, helping drive Australia's quest to become a net exporting music nation and enabling important Australian stories to travel the globe.

Artists whose first international activity was propelled by Sounds Australia include Alex Lahey, Alice in Wonderland, Amyl and the Sniffers, Boy and Bear, Budjerah, Chet Faker, Confidence Man, Courtney Barnett, DMA'S, Dune Rats, DZ Deathrays, Flume, G Flip, Gang of Youths, Gordi, Julia Jacklin, Lime Cordiale, Mallrat, Methyl Ethel, Middle Kids, Peking Duk, RUFUS DU SOL, Sampa the Great, Stella Donnelly, Sycco, The Rubens, The Teskey Brothers, Tkay Maidza, Vance Joy and Vera Blue.

Unified investment into Sounds Australia by the government, in partnership with leading trade bodies, will continue to raise the profile and visibility of Australian artists and industry in key international markets, whilst growing the economic and cultural value of Australian music exports.



The music business is increasingly a global business, and Sounds Australia plays a pivotal role in helping our local artists and labels reach new audiences around the world. Continued and increased investment in the national export initiative will ensure Sounds Australia can undertake the following export activity from 2023 and beyond:

- Continue to purposefully and proudly present and increase Australia's First Nations artists at all key international showcase events as an important celebration of Australia culture, whilst delivering export pathways and career opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and industry professionals.
- Consolidate and reinforce Australia's presence in the established music markets where the most immediate foreign revenue can be earned by Australian acts: North America, UK and Europe.
- Continue to cultivate relationships with DSPs globally to advocate for more Australian music on influential playlists.
- Develop opportunities with partners, events and industries that would increase the use of Australian music in film, TV, advertising, and gaming globally.
- Lead targeted industry Trade Missions, both to existing international conference events and as standalone initiatives that concentrate solely on supporting the professional development of Australian Artist Managers, allowing them to advance their international networks and increase skill capacity.
- Commence export activity in New Zealand and examine the potential to partner with NZ to consolidate resources internationally and strengthen our unique position in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Expand Australian export activity into Asia, Latin America and MENA. Japan (#2), China (#6) and South Korea (#7) all featured in top 10 music markets in the 2021 IFPI Report. Revenues were up by 31.2% in Latin America, with 2021 the 12th year of consecutive growth in the region. Brazil (+32.0%) and Mexico (+27.7%) account for 66.5% of the region's revenues. MENA experienced 35.0% growth in 2021 and Sub-Saharan Africa saw a 56.4% growth in ad-supported streaming.
- Cultivate and inspire music diplomacy by continuing to encourage the Australian Government to foster a culture of engaging Australian Music. Insist that all formal and social Government activity, events, promotions, and functions hosted by Australian Embassies, Consulates or High Commissions employ Australian acts for live performance or utilise Australian playlists as background music.
- Explore the prospects of Web3 for Australian artists and industry and examine opportunities to invest in infrastructure and partnerships that will allow Sounds Australia to present Australian showcase experiences in the metaverse.
- Increase the amount of boutique export buyers programs and in-bound activity delivered annually in Australia.

With just five full time staff and an annual budget of a little over AU \$1 million, Sounds Australia is competing in a music export field with varying degrees of national support. For example, Music Export Finland possesses a staff of around 20 with an annual budget of €4.7m (Palmu, 2016) and France's export office, Le Bureau Export, has 35 staff in over six international offices and receives approximately €3.2m annual funding (Le Bureau Export, 2016). In terms of both staffing and annual budget ratios, Sounds Australia continues to operate with less resources than many of its core competitors.

Now is the time for Sounds Australia to become a definitive budget line item in forward estimates. After 12 years of growth and documented success, no longer should it be a question of should Sounds Australia be funded by the government of the day – it should be a matter of how much, with a minimum of \$1,000,000 from federal government invested annually.

CREATION OF A DEDICATED COMMONWEALTH MUSIC EXPORT DEVELOPMENT FUND

Sounds Australia has long advocated for the need for increased and targeted access to international funding for Australian artists and industry professionals. Particular attention was drawn to this need in our submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Australian music industry in 2019. Please refer to pages 27 – 29 of [Sounds Australia's Submission 95](#).

The creation of a multi-year Music Export Development Fund forms a bold partnership between the Australian Government and the Australian Music Industry, designed to support artists and industry professionals at different phases, and provide access to targeted financial backing to advance and sustain their international careers.

The proposed Music Export Development Fund offers fit-for-purpose support for Australian artists at each career milestone, providing bespoke funding grants to cater to three career phases: Emerging, Breakthrough and Established. In addition to funding artists' careers, the Music Export Development Fund would also provide targeted financial support for Australian Industry Professionals and specific opportunities for First Nations artists and practitioners.

The Music Export Development Fund would be available to Australian citizens or permanent residents who are current practicing music professionals. This includes solo artists, bands, DJs, producers, songwriters, technical crew, management companies, and labels and publishers that are working to export Australian music.

The investment will support export activity which includes, but is not limited to: touring/live shows, co-writing, media appearances, tour managing, stage production, conference attendance and business meetings.

Every application (individual or group) must demonstrate that they are contributing an amount equal to, or more than, the total funding they request, ensuring that the co-investment by industry is at minimum matching the Government's investment.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Australian music is finding its place on the world stage. The number of artists and professionals earning foreign revenue is increasing yearly.
- Post-pandemic operating climate of significantly increased costs and fierce competition.
- Currently no dedicated Federal funding available for international activity for the contemporary music sector.
- History shows that investment in music export funding produces real outcomes and growth.
- Australian music industry is entrepreneurial, born global and prepared to back itself.
- Enormous opportunity to formulate a strategic co-investment program between Government and industry.
- Drive Australia to achieve the vision of becoming a net exporter of music that stands alongside other great music-creating nations like the USA, UK and Sweden.

RATIONALE

- Year upon year Australian artists make a name for themselves across the globe. This investment will be a key driver to realising Australia's goal of becoming one of the few net exporters of music, delivering a significant economic and cultural dividend for the nation. With a pipeline of talent coming from across the nation, Australia has the potential to go from a music nation to a music powerhouse by placing the export of Australian music front and centre of our country's post-pandemic strategy.
- Australian music exports are increasing and delivering substantial economic and cultural benefits to the nation. The growing international activity of Australian music artists has seen revenue from overseas royalties collected by APRA AMCOS double in the past five years, as well as significant increases in the number of international performances and the number of songwriters earning internationally. In 2019, there were 615 unique Australian acts who were paid via APRA's Overseas Live Performance Return scheme and in 2020/2021, despite the lack of live performance earnings due to the global pandemic, international revenue from AUS/NZ was \$60.2m, an increase of 10.7% up from \$54.4m last year, with 19,880 members earning international royalties.
- In July 2019, Australian Research Council Linkage project The Economic and Cultural Value of Australian Music Exports estimated the combined annual export income of Australian artists, music publishers and record labels at a conservative \$195 million. Artists' income accounts for the largest proportion (61%), with the remainder split between music publishers (20%) and record labels (19%).
- With physical record sale income almost entirely removed from the revenue mix, a domestic market the size of Australia is no longer able to make, break or sustain careers. Contemporary music needs strategic and committed investment at all points of an artist's life cycle to develop international audiences and compete on the world stage.

- Despite the increasing contribution of digital technology in the music sector, live performance still accounts for the majority of artists' foreign income: 49% comes from this source, compared to 37% from songwriting and performance royalties, and 17% from other sources such as merchandising and sponsorship. For Australian artists, established markets such as the United States, United Kingdom and Germany are currently the most lucrative.
- The COVID-19 pandemic's significant effect on supply chains, increased inflation rates, US Visa process times, and overall demand outstripping available hire needs have all contributed to putting unprecedented pressure on international touring. The cost of doing business has gone up and will only continue to increase, with agents and managers anecdotally reporting that their touring costs are increasing from between 30% – 100%.
- Further economic considerations for the music industry will be in the contest for disposable income for the foreseeable future. Music is already fighting a battle with Netflix, social media, gaming, and other forms of entertainment for the public's attention. The reality is people will need to make choices with their dollars. With professional sports, movie releases, amusement parks and recreational travel all restarting, the music business needs to urgently strategise how to compete and win customer attention to secure much needed entertainment dollars post-pandemic.
- Government and industry provide crucial support for export activities. It can take many years, much travel and significant financial investment to break into a new international market. Successful music exporters across all career levels require support and assistance to realise their export strategies. In developing a successful export strategy, government grants are seen as the largest and most important source of funding for a majority of music exporters. Among those surveyed in the ARC Research Born Global, artists with support from both government and industry reported the greatest success rate in establishing deals for export.
- Further, it is evident that artists – musicians, singers, songwriters, composers and DJs – who are successful exporters tend to be more successful at home as well. A comparison of those who have earned export income and those who haven't shows that the average domestic income of exporters is significantly higher than that of non-exporters (\$28,545 versus \$15,147), and exporters on average have approximately twice as much total profit from both domestic and foreign sources.
- It is no coincidence that the increase in the number of Australian artists developing global audiences, being offered label deals, and being booked to play coveted international festivals overlapped with the existence of targeted and fit-for-purpose contemporary music export grants administered by the Australia Council from 2008 to 2014.
- Artists and professionals operating in today's Australian Music Industry are "born global" exporters and business leaders. Highly ambitious and committed individuals, they are determined to succeed, and willing to invest the time and money required to do so. Confident and highly driven, they remain optimistic about the future despite the current COVID challenges and in the context of looming economic uncertainty. They seek out and exploit opportunities and are early adopters of technology.
- The years of personal financial investment and sacrifices these leading Australian artists have made to now be performing at iconic venues worldwide is comparable to Australia's Olympic Athletes. It is critical that our nation's most significant contemporary cultural ambassadors are given the support to successfully continue to access key global markets and represent Australian voices and culture in front of millions on international stages.



OUTCOMES

Backing and Expediting Success – The level of success Australian artists experience in international markets is already something well established and celebrated. There is a clear line between the Government’s backing of export and the growth of Australian music success globally as evidenced by the Born Global Report.

In delivering a dedicated funding scheme for Australian music export, the Government will play a significant role in expediting the profile and success story of Australia’s future A-list artists, Grammy winners, and celebrated music professionals.

Australian artists and music businesses can rarely be sustained off a domestic market alone. Making funds available for export will inevitably assist with long term career sustainability and enable music businesses access to varied additional revenue streams across multiple territories, bolstering the overall economic performance of the sector.

Pathways to knowledge and economic growth – In funding these entities to export, the in-road to global markets affords local teams access to international income as well as lived experiences of consumer trends, innovation and industry outside of Australia.

As Australian music makers and industry are exposed to global insights, new technologies and strategies for success, this intelligence feeds back to the industry and consequently promises a greater wealth of knowledge within the sector, and in turn increased financial wins at home and abroad.

As Australian music success increases abroad, inevitably the employment prospects of the workforce grows substantially, and more skilled Australians are employed and utilised, including crew, engineers, lawyers, managers, booking agents and musicians.

Strengthen the nation’s brand and trade relations – Promoting Australian music internationally works broadly to grow recognition and appreciation of Australian products and services, celebrates and promotes the richness of the country’s culture to global audiences, and demonstrates an ability to compete in the global marketplace. Exporting artists also share Australian stories, culture and perspectives with the world, helping to build national identity and contributing to cultural diplomacy and Australia’s reputation.

Delivering a multi-year Music Export Development Fund will grow the Australian Music sector and be measurable by monitoring and tracking the following export activity movements:

- Increase in Australian acts on international festivals
- Increase in ticketed headline tours undertaken by Australian artists
- Increase in Australian acts chosen for support tours
- Overall increase in foreign revenue earnings by Australian artists
- More Australians featured on “Best of Year”, “Ones to Watch” and “Breakthrough” lists
- More Australian acts nominated for global music awards (Grammys, Brits, MTV)
- Increased overseas radio airplay
- Increased number of Australians featured on global streaming service playlists
- More Australian composers creating new works with international collaborators
- More Australians featured as the music guest on international television shows



FRAMEWORK AND ADMINISTRATION

Within the current funding landscape there is capacity and potential for the proposed Music Export Development Fund to be administered by the Australia Council for the Arts, the Office for the Arts or Sounds Australia.

The three distinct beneficiaries for targeted financial support – First Nations, Artists (Emerging, Breakthrough and Established) and Music Industry Professionals – inform the proposed six funding category framework.

1. FIRST NATIONS

Purposefully and proudly present Australia's First Nations artists at all key international showcase events whilst delivering export pathways and opportunities for ATSI professionals

A contribution of \$5000 towards flights/accommodation for each performing artist member who receives an official invitation to showcase at an international event, and for industry practitioners who seek to attend an international conference or conduct industry meetings.

Indicative Forecast: 35 individuals x \$5,000 = \$175,000

2. INAUGURAL SHOWCASE SUPPORT

One-time only opportunity, investing in the potential

Australian artists who receive an official invitation to showcase at an international conference event (SXSW, The Great Escape, Jazzahead, Folk Alliance, AmericanaFest, WOMEX, Classical:NEXT) are eligible to receive a contribution of \$2000 towards flights/accommodation for each performing artist member.

Indicative Forecast: 300 individuals x \$2,000 = \$600,000

3. RETURN TO MARKET

Backing success

For those artists who have already invested in themselves and are needing to return to an overseas market in a timely fashion to capitalise on their success and the opportunities that have arisen because of previous international engagement and activity.

Indicative Forecast: 25 acts x \$15,000 x 3 Rounds = \$1,125,000

4. INTERNATIONAL GROWTH

Sustaining global careers

Comparable to the current COVID SAES criteria, artists eligible for this category must demonstrate an existing/established international profile, a strong global team and significant export activity.

Forecast: 15 acts x \$25,000 x 2 Rounds = \$750,000



5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Paving accessible international pathways

Dedicated funding that will assist Australian music managers and industry professionals in expanding their international global networks and opportunities for themselves and their respective rosters.

Indicative Forecast: 50 individuals x \$5,000 = \$250,000

6. RECOGNISING AUSTRALIAN SKILLS EXCELLENCE

Advancing the global trajectories of Australian Crew

Funding specifically for Australian crew who have secured work on international tours. With exorbitant visa costs often a prohibitive factor in crew accessing international opportunities, this fund would be available to specialist skilled industry working across Tour Managing, Audio, Lighting, Staging, Set and Construction, Pyrotechnics and Photographers.

Indicative Forecast: 10 individuals x \$5,000 = \$50,000

Total cost of the comprehensive Music Export Grant Program including assessment and administration is approximately \$3,028,750.00 per year.



VISA REFORM – IMPROVING AUSTRALIAN ARTIST’S MOBILITY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

One of, if not the single greatest barrier to exporting Australian music to North America is the difficulties and costs associated with petitioning an entertainment Visa for artists to showcase and tour in the United States of America.

"US visas are a painstaking process; confusing, expensive, time consuming, and more. They greatly reduce the amount of business we can do with venues across the USA. With the invention of social media and streaming, the speed which artists can develop a global and USA specific audience has changed drastically. There is a disconnect between an artist with a large USA following and what the US government defines as an artist worthy of procuring a visa".

Tom Windish, Wasserman Music

(Leading US Agent representing six Australian artists at various stages of their careers)

Sounds Australia strongly supports the ongoing work of Tamizdat, a US non-profit organisation that facilitates and advocates for international cultural mobility and exchange. Tamizdat seeks to assist the international performing arts community in addressing problems presented by international borders, and U.S. immigration policy and procedure.

Background

Under U.S. law, if a performing artist wishes to perform in the U.S.—even unpaid or for one performance—typically they must first obtain an “O” or a “P” visa. O visas are available to artists who can show that they have “extraordinary ability” in their field, while P visas are available to artists who are members of “internationally recognized entertainment groups” or “culturally unique programs”. To protect the labour interests of American performing artists, eligibility for these visas is strictly limited: individuals are only found to be eligible when it can be proven that they provide an irreplaceable benefit to the U.S.

There are three steps to securing an O or a P visa. First, a petition must be filed with USCIS, which must demonstrate that the artist meets the legal requirements with respect to the artist’s professional calibre, and that the artist will have bona fide employment while in the U.S. If the petition is approved by USCIS, the second step is for the artist to apply for the physical visa and complete an interview at a U.S. consulate, in a process overseen by DOS.

If the artist is found to have no reasons for ineligibility (like a criminal record, or membership in a demographic perceived as likely to attempt illegal emigration), the artist’s visa is approved and issued by the consulate.



Lastly, with passport and visa in hand, the artist must appear for inspection before a U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer who makes the final determination of “admissibility”.

There are hundreds of ways that this process can go wrong for a performing artist, often resulting in the cancellation of concerts, performances, or even whole tours. Sometimes what goes wrong is the fault of an artist or their management who misunderstands the process, fails to leave enough time, or encounters a legitimate barrier, like a prior criminal record.

But far too often unnecessary delays, performance cancellations and exorbitant costs are the result of USCIS and DOS officers working under the guidance of regulatory authorities that are inefficient, unclear, contradictory, or counter to the intent of the law. These unnecessary delays, cancellations, and costs result in hardships for the artist and their supporting institutions, as well as for the businesses in the U.S. which rely upon the artist’s presence.

The United States Congress created the O and P visa classifications under the Immigration Act of 1990 and the O and P Nonimmigrant Amendments of 1991 as part of the Miscellaneous and Technical Immigration and Naturalization Amendments of 1991. Initially, in keeping with congressional intent, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (“INS”) applied the law broadly, and with the support of U.S. labour unions, the performing arts industry generally found the new process manageable and affordable: the Service’s fee was \$135, the unions charged no fee for their consultation, and the process could be successfully navigated without the aid—and cost—of legal counsel.

Unfortunately, throughout the 1990s and even more so since 2001, policies and procedures at INS (later USCIS) and DOS have significantly increased the administrative complexity and unreliability of the process. This has placed a tremendous burden on the U.S. Government, petitioners, employers, labour unions, and beneficiaries. Consequently, the Service has steadily increased the I-129 fee to the current \$460, and the unions have been compelled to charge fees as high as \$500 per petition to cover their increased labour costs.

Most significantly, however, the process’ increased complexity and inconsistency has forced most Australian petitioners to pay for the Premium Processing fee every time to expedite their application, along with needing to hire administrative or legal assistance, with fees that range from \$800 to \$8000 USD per petition (approximately \$AUD 11,500). The current cost of arranging an O-1B or P visa for a foreign artist is now typically more than twenty times the cost of the same process in 1991!

Tamizdat believes that the current policies and procedures around the enforcement of O and P classifications have created an unconscionable lose/lose situation for the United States: they impede the activities of U.S. businesses and cultural organisations that rely on foreign performers, they unnecessarily strain chronically understaffed and overworked employees at USCIS and DOS, and they significantly impact the American people’s access to international culture.



Having spent the last five years studying thousands of O and P cases, Tamizdat's findings and recommendations are presented in the 2020 edition of their [White Paper on Artist Mobility to the United States](#).

Their recommendations are motivated by the conviction that the majority of problems encountered by the performing arts industry are the result of unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles that neither enhance U.S. security nor serve to protect U.S. labour interests. They seek to demonstrate through the White Paper that vast improvements to the system can be made by systematically addressing these specific impediments, which unduly burden the U.S. performing arts industries and create unnecessary inefficiencies at USCIS and DOS.

Tamizdat's White Paper has three goals:

- (1) To identify the most significant problems in the current system used by international artists to obtain the authorization needed to legally enter the United States to perform;
- (2) To locate the legal or operational origins of these problems; and
- (3) To propose workable solutions to these problems.

Creation of a Provisional Cultural Visa

In addition to the solutions put forward by Tamizdat to resolve the existing issues with the P and O visa process, Sounds Australia believes there is tremendous value in the Australian government instigating discussions with the US government, relative to the creation of a Provisional Cultural Visa.

A Provisional Cultural Visa could be managed in a similar vein to the existing ESTA and allow Australian artists, creatives, and crew under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) to enter the United States up to three times to undertake showcasing and entry level export activity.

It is widely understood that during the first three trips of any artist's career when exporting to the United States, there is significant financial investment at stake, however it is only flowing one way. Considerably money is spent by Australian artists on USA accommodation, internal flights, vehicle hire, ground transport, production, local crew, rehearsal spaces, studios, daily per diems etc. Very little to no money is ever made from these first tours, with any money that is earned being re-invested into the return trip.

Reducing such a considerable barrier to entry at the early stages of an artist's exporting career would provide Australian acts the valuable time and increased ability to really assess their potential future in the USA market without the uncertainty, risk, stress, and exorbitant costs currently involved.

At the completion of three separate entries into the United States (for a maximum of 90 days each) via the Provisional Cultural Visa, the Australian artist would then be obligated to secure a working O or P visa, although by that stage they should know if there is a growing audience for them and would have established key US business partnerships.



Anecdotally, Sounds Australia knows that there are a significant number of US businesses currently working with Australian artists. These include record labels, aggregators, distributors, booking agents, publishers, publicists, radio pluggers and attorneys. Music is a global business, and these Australian acts make up a valuable portion of their revenue streams which increase exponentially when the Australian act can physically tour and undertake promotional activities in the United States.

Sounds Australia are in the middle of collecting valuable data to back the declaration that supports the case for Visa reform and more so, why the introduction of a new visa entry tier, whilst game changing for Australians, would also provide considerable value and financial benefit to American Music Businesses.

So far from the small sample of music industry surveyed, we have learnt.

- 167 Australian artists are currently signed to 41 US Record labels/Distributors
- 15 US Booking Agents, representing 48 Australian artists are commissioning between \$1.55m and \$3.07m USD annually, an average of \$2.25m USD.
- 38 Australian acts are spending a combined \$7,859,000 AUD in the USA each year

The feedback received, is also sending a strong message, that the difficulty and costs associated with securing US Visas is having a negative impact on both current and potential signings of Australian artists, by US music business.

"Before we take on any touring commitments, we have to understand that the US visa process will a) slow down/limit our ability to tour at a moments notice and b) but the band in a hefty financial deficit before they even leave their own country."

- Australian Artist Manager

"There have been numerous times that we have liked an artist's work enough to sign them, or at least seriously discuss signing them, but have not pursued them for the sole and specific reason that the cost of getting them to the US is too high. Having an artist release a record, only to later find out we could not reasonably get them into the US to promote it, not only created a financial loss for the label and that artist, it played a significant part in (amicably) ending our relationship with that specific artist and has also discouraged us from signing (some but not all) other Australians."

- Established US Record Label

Remit of Global Australia

The Australian Government taskforce [Global Australia](#) provides tailored support for high-value businesses and extraordinary individuals to bring their talents to Australia. The formidable Taskforce is a whole-of-nation initiative, hosted by the Department of Home Affairs in partnership with the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It is supported by: Treasury; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources; Department of Defence; Department of Education, Skills and Employment; state and territory governments.

Sounds Australia would like to see the Global Australia taskforce also work in the other direction, by supporting bold and ambitious Australians make their mark overseas, and work with the Department of the Arts to bring about much needed reform relative to the ease of mobility for Australian creative industries.



Sounds Australia thanks the Government for the opportunity to participate in such a vital process and is grateful to be able to submit our contribution for consideration to the anticipated National Cultural Policy.

During the recent Town Hall Meetings, we were particularly inspired by the Minister, Hon Tony Burke's acknowledgement of the 2013 Creative Australia Policy and agree that there's merit in not completely reinventing the wheel and instead leaning into the existing strong foundations contained within and building upon them for a timelier completion.

The program of export activity and services provided by Sounds Australia truly reflects the 5 pillars identified by the Government.



FIRST NATIONS FIRST: RECOGNISING AND RESPECTING THE CRUCIAL PLACE OF THESE STORIES AT THE CENTRE OF OUR ARTS AND CULTURE.

Sounds Australia purposefully and proudly present Australia's First Nations artists at all key international showcase events as an important celebration of Australia culture, whilst delivering export pathways and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and professionals.

In 2019, Sounds Australia engaged a First Nations Export Producer to provide decision-making, advice, engagement and guidance to Sounds Australia's export strategy, ensuring cultural protocols and processes in promoting Indigenous artists internationally are practiced.

Following year-round consultation and engagement with First Nations artists, music companies and business leaders, Sounds Australia directly present Australian Indigenous artists to the Programming Directors of international showcase festivals for inclusion in their yearly line-ups.

Artists that have showcased on Sounds Australia stages include: A.B. ORIGINAL, Alice Skye, Aodhan, Baker Boy, Benny Walker, Birdz, Budjerah, Busby Marou, Dan Sultan, David Spry, Deline Briscoe, DOBBY, Electric Fields, Emily Wurramara, Frank Yamma, Glenn Skuthorpe, Gurrumul, Hand to Earth: Australian Art Orchestra, Kee'ahn, Loren Ryan, Microwave Jenny, Mikhail Laxton, Mission Songs Project, Mo'Ju, , Nancy Bates, Nathan May, Pirritu (Brett Lee), Shellie Morris, Sycco, Tia Gostelow, Troy Cassar-Daley and Yirmal.



A PLACE FOR EVERY STORY: REFLECTING THE DIVERSITY OF OUR STORIES AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF ALL AUSTRALIANS AS THE CREATORS OF CULTURE

Australian artists and their team of representatives are akin to our Olympic athletes. They are elite cultural ambassadors representing our country and stories on the global stages. Their songs and art directly reflect the unique and incomparable environment in which they were raised and where their craft was nurtured. There is no singular Australian story – in sharing Australian music on global stages, Sounds Australia makes space and offers platforms for cultural stereotypes to be shattered and replaced with newfound insights, collaboration, admiration and enlightenment – celebrating and promoting diversity in all its forms.



THE CENTRALITY OF THE ARTIST: SUPPORTING THE ARTIST AS WORKER AND CELEBRATING THEIR ROLE AS THE CREATORS OF CULTURE

Artists and creators are the foundation on which the entire Australian music industry is built upon. The role artists and creators play in our industry's ecosystem cannot be overstated; they are the beating heart behind everything we do. We celebrate them for their courage and vulnerability, and their ability to create works of art that move, challenge, and inspire us as individuals, simultaneously acting as unifiers for communities.

Australian artists have unique talents with universal appeal. They are undeniably the driving force behind one of Australia's most exciting and creative exports. As we learnt from the recent research study *Born Global*: exports can provide vital income to artists.

Sounds Australia recognises there is an opportunity to support more artists and increase their capacity to generate export income and build sustainable careers. Through clear strategic direction and dynamic in-market presence Sounds Australia will continue to advance the export interests and success of our Australian artists globally.



STRONG INSTITUTIONS: PROVIDING SUPPORT ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF INSTITUTIONS WHICH SUSTAIN OUR ARTS AND CULTURE

Sounds Australia's leadership and role as a trusted institution has created a camaraderie and a palpable willingness for all levels of Australian artists and industry to work together in their export endeavours for the benefit of all.

Priming Australia's music creatives for career advancement through guidance and dedicated professional strategising, our tailored education and resources ensure accessibility for all levels of the Australian music industry, from grass roots to experienced exporters. Our suite of offerings include the presentation of topical masterclasses, comprehensive online resources (including real time updates on Visas, Funding, Carnets, Insurance and Covid Impacts), market knowledge intelligence and tailored meeting management.

Bilateral partnerships and regional collaborations are essential to cultivating robust environments for Australian artists and music professionals to flourish and succeed in their exporting aspirations. Sounds Australia is only as strong as the multitude of domestic and international relationships that have been developed since inception with key organisations, local experts and government officials.

In its lifespan, Sounds Australia has partnered with over 70 domestic and international institutions -from state music industry bodies to consulates and embassies, trade departments of other countries, and countless music export offices to provide galvanised professional development opportunities for Australian managers, label executives, publishers, agents, and self-managed artists.



REACHING THE AUDIENCE: ENSURING OUR STORIES REACH THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Sounds Australia plays a pivotal role in helping Australian artists reach audiences around the world.

Based on experience and a proven track record in successfully connecting the local music industry to global opportunities, Sounds Australia has strategically crafted a framework of unique support mechanisms to expedite the artist discovery process and catapult home grown talent into the consciousness of the world's most influential music industry.

From their very first export outing, Sounds Australia works to ensure local artists are showcasing to key industry leaders and decision makers, resulting in increased professional and commercial outcomes, and consequently growing their international audiences and global fan bases.

Sounds Australia's presence on streaming services continues to grow with playlists now sitting across eight different DSPs, including Apple Music, Deezer, Pandora, Qobuz, TIDAL, Soundcloud, Spotify and YouTube, ensuring Australian voices and stories reach even more audiences outside of those attending physical events.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Sounds Australia wholeheartedly supports and has actively contributed to the submissions made to the new National Cultural Policy by both APRA AMCOS and the Australian Contemporary Music Industry Joint Submission.

The Australian contemporary music industry calls on the Albanese Labor Government to establish a legacy for generations and provide a substantive, committed strategic investment through a dedicated, overarching umbrella vehicle that reflects the potential of contemporary music.

A national contemporary music development agency 'Music Australia', with a dedicated and self-determined First Nations team, could oversee and support the investment in organisations and key strategic objectives including: Policy Development, Workplace safety and culture, Research, Creative Development, Market and Audience Development, Industry Development and Export.

ADDENDUM

Link: FURTHER REFERENCE MATERIALS TO SUPPORT SOUNDS AUSTRALIA'S POLICY SUBMISSION

We may use some of your words as part of the National Cultural Policy Report. If we do, how would you like us to attribute your words?

Name: Millie Millgate

Organisation: Sounds Australia

Contact: [REDACTED]

