

National Cultural Policy Submission

THE FUTURE OF LIVE MUSIC IN AUSTRALIA

As the global appetite for music continues to grow, ***the vision for the Australian contemporary music industry is to move from a music nation to a global music powerhouse that can fully realise the cultural, economic and social benefits of a vibrant, healthy and sustainable music industry accessible to all Australians.***

Despite the enormous contribution of Australian contemporary music to our national identity, our sense of community and GDP, no national government has developed a long-term vision for the industry. The Albanese Labor Government has the opportunity to create a professional, rigorous and representative policy and investment framework to supercharge Australian music, leaving a legacy for generations.

CrewCare is a national organisation and registered NFP charity, incorporated in October 2019. Our voluntary board of 12 directors boast 400+ years of collective industry experience. Along with many other volunteers, we have established ourselves as the peak industry body representing live music crew in Australia.

The live production industry has been one of the hardest hit by the COVID pandemic. Overnight our entire workforce ceased trading. Unlike musicians, managers and many others operating in the music business, crew's sole source of income is live music events. Many operate as sole traders or itinerant workers subcontracted by numerous employers in a gig-to-gig economy. As a result, many did not qualify for Job Keeper or other government incentives; their only financial relief came from **SupportAct's** Crisis and COVID relief grants.

CrewCare has identified key programs and avenues that would address significant issues that directly affect our sector, noting recommendations contained herein align with **pillar three** of the 2013 Creative Australia National Cultural Policy.

Crewcare also supports the wider approach which a united industry is recommending through our involvement with leading industry thinktank **OpenMIC**, in the knowledge all sectors of the industry must prosper to the benefit of each other and ensure the future growth of Australian culture.

SUMMARY

The first step is to stabilise our industry by maintaining existing programs of support, urgently investing in skills lost to the pandemic and setting in place the structures to support new growth by attracting investment. This can be achieved by:

- Establishing a long-term sustainable plan to attract, support and retain a pipeline of future live production talent which is key to delivering quality Australian productions at scale,
- Exploring methods to attract new investments through taxation offsets and,
- Establishing a national music development office to support a centralized approach to diversity and inclusion measures across our sector.

RECCOMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT PILLAR 3 – THE CENTRALITY OF THE ARTIST

1. INDUSTRY STABLISATION

- a. Critical and recurrent funding for **SupportAct** for ongoing crisis relief and support programs.

- b. New investment in traineeships and skills development to rebuild capacity and address skills shortage across the live music industry ecosystem
- c. Subsidised support for casual or sole trader positions across the live music sector.
- d. Business Interruption Insurance

2. INDUSTRY EVALUATION, EVOLUTION AND SUPPORT

- a. Research. Invest in data collection, industry research including a regularly updated snapshot of industry activity
- b. Workplace safety and culture. Partner with industry to address the findings and implement the recommendations of the Music Industry Review into sexual harm, sexual harassment and systemic discrimination.

3. WAGE SUBSIDY/OVERTIME INCENTIVE

- a. Wage subsidy and or/increased penalty rates to attract and retain key skills and labour force to a sector that works long and irregular hours.
- b. By drawing more people to the sector, it will alleviate the burden on longer and irregular hours being maintained by skeleton crews, reducing OHS and fatigue management risks

4. LIVE MUSIC AUSTRALIA

- a. Live music venue based tax offset which will jump-start and accelerate the resurrection and expansion of the Australian live music industry – the base of the Australian music ecosystem.
- b. Live music touring and presentation grants.

5. COORDINATION WITH INDUSTRY ON PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

- a. Investigate a defined benefits framework and nationally consistent rules to ensure the viability of the public liability insurance for live music venues and events. We refer the government to the Australian Live Music Business Council submission for further information.

APPENDIX I

SUMMARY OF CREWCARE'S ACTIVITIES

Crisis & Support Program Funding

Throughout the pandemic (and prior), SupportAct's Crisis Relief grants and social welfare services have been a saviour to many crew. CrewCare actively promote these services and direct many crew members to Support Act's Wellbeing Helpline and assist with their Crisis Relief grant applications. It is critical that SupportAct receive recurrent funding for ongoing crisis relief and to help the industry create sustainable cultural and behavioural change in mental health and wellbeing.

Workplace Training & Mentorship

With the loss of senior and experienced personnel comes a major problem in recruitment. Whilst there are registered training organisations that teach students across many technical aspects, there is no substitute for on the job learnings. CrewCare, with the assistance of Creative Victoria, has undertaken two important programs which have seen new entrants undertaking practical training modules with leading businesses and 'shown the ropes'. Other businesses such as Live Nation and Red Dirt have also taken on new recruits at their own expense. These programs involve mentorships and are essential for the live music industry to grow and move forward. It is vital for further funding to ensure similar programs can be established and expanded.

Research

Limited research has been conducted on the ecology of the live music industry, noting the few that have been undertaken paint alarming pictures of mental and physical health concerns. The pre-pandemic 2016 study commissioned by Entertainment Assist and recent post-pandemic study commissioned by SupportAct both highlight elevated levels of mental and physical health issues amongst the crewing fraternity. Minimal research has been undertaken into the live music production industry, specifically to identify the scope and underlying causation for such concerns apart from anecdotal evidence. Fatigue management, OH&S and industry work practices are known to contribute, however it is vital we understand these factors and provide solutions to ensure a healthier future, working smarter and safer.