

National Cultural Policy submission: Local Content Quotas for Music across all platforms.

Submitting as an individual/music industry professional and educator, advocating for the Australian music industry

Chrissie Vincent
Masters Of International Music Business
To be Published

August 20, 2022

Introduction:

As the proprietor of an independent entertainment management, publicity, and marketing company, Chrissie Vincent Publicity & Management, I have worked within the music industry for 41 years, running my business for 17 years. I have significant national and international music industry expertise and knowledge and currently sit on several industry advisory committees including Creative Victoria and am Chair of The Push (Youth Organisation) board. I am also Head of the Bachelor of Entertainment Management Degree and lecturer at the Australian College of The Arts in Melbourne and hold a Master of International Music Business. In 2019, I started a public awareness campaign and petition called Feature More Australian Music (FM/AM), however due to the music industry going into temporary shutdown due to Covid, the campaign was paused and will be resumed later this year.

<https://www.change.org/p/music-industry-feature-more-australian-music-campaign>

As an educator, publicist and advocate for Australian contemporary and independent artists, I find the promotion of Australian music and culture becoming more difficult in the new world of digital disruption. In my experience, commercial radio has a tendency for constitutive censorship and has little interest in the promotion of new Australian artists and content, leaving community radio and Triple J to do most of the work breaking new Australian acts. This has been evidenced in my research which has been published in peer reviewed scholarly journal Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association ([MEIEA, 2018](#)) and has been acknowledged by industry, artists and organisations publicly ([ABC, 2019](#)) and privately. Due to this personal experience, I focused my research and thesis on Australian content on commercial radio and in particular the local content quotas. However, in 2022 due to the rapid technological advances and changing consumer consumption and behaviour, I believe that the issue of content quotas should also focus on digital service providers and streaming platforms including Spotify, Amazon, and Apple Music. Implementing content quotas on editorial playlists would ensure that Australian music is represented, acknowledged, and remunerated and have a voice in an increasingly globalised and connected world.

The absence of support and regulation of Australian music on mainstream commercial radio and streaming platforms' directly affects the music industry as a whole, of which my business and many others like it operate. As an independent music industry professional, the enclosed submission is regarding the importance of Australian content and impact both economic and cultural on the Australian creative industries.

In the submission to the Parliamentary inquiry into the Australian music industry in November 2018, my key recommendations included:

- Review the current self-regulatory reporting protocol by CRA
- Review AMPCOM and input a regulatory board to implement and ensure local content is being supported across all platforms
- The government to develop incentives and or policy to support Australian content on digital platforms
- CRA to develop programming within peak times to foster local music content which will differentiate them from global radio and digital services
- Continue to nurture the country's cultural diversity through the support of the music community as a whole

Several of my recommendations were listed in the report's findings including:

- 'Changing the application and monitoring of Australian music content quotas for commercial radio'

As you can see from some of the findings below in the Final Report, under 'Incentives to use Australian Music' support for local content quotas on radio and streaming platforms is backed by the industry: -

3. *Many participants supported Australian content requirements for commercial radio broadcasters. The Australasian Music Publishers Association (AMPAL) explained that, rather than viewing Australian content quotas as an impost for operators or a form of forced supply, they should be recognised as an obligation 'inherent in gaining access to the finite analogue and digital spectrum to offer a commercial service to the Australian public'.²*
4. *The Australasian Performing Right Association and Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society (APRA AMCOS) told the committee that 'local content requirements continue to remain highly relevant to the Australian broadcast media landscape', explaining that 'quotas provide an enormous opportunity for radio stations to celebrate great Australian musical works and discover the exciting new talent emerging across the country and grabbing international headlines'.³*

This submission's motivation is to compel the government to develop incentives and or policy to support Australian content on digital platforms and streaming services and to reinstate a regulated approach to local content quotas on commercial radio, as the self-regulated approach to the minimum requirement of Australian content has failed to deliver the outcomes required to continue and sustain the development of the Australian music industry.

I will address how Local Content Quotas correlate to the 5 pillars below: -

1. First Nations - Recognise, respect, and celebrate the centrality of First Nations cultures to the uniqueness of Australian identity.

Since the late 1970's, Indigenous artists have been speaking their truth in song and popular music, with artists such as the Warumpi Band, No Fixed Address and the successful Yothu Yindi paving the way for indigenous musicians. The later, would never have found the success they did without the support of radio airplay in Australia, which found them on a trajectory that took their music all over the world. The importance of ensuring ALL Australian musicians and artists including our first nations people, continue to have a voice and celebrate their unique culture is imperative in our new Cultural policy. Instilling Local Content Quotas that also include indigenous acts would ensure that this was the case. Currently, indigenous artists such as The Kid Laroi, Jessica Mauboy, King Stingray, Thelma Plum and Baker Boy and many more are proving that success both nationally and internationally is within reach and should be supported at all times.

2. A Place for Every Story – supporting the diversity of Australia.

Diversity across the Australian music industry is also important and something that has been at the forefront of change within the industry in recent years. It is imperative that this diversity is also supported with ALL Australian artists (female, male, indigenous, non-binary and underrepresented racial/ethnic groups and older artists) are being supported on radio and streaming platforms. Our music has the chance to define popular culture and societal attitudes in Australia, a quota system in place of 25% would lead the way in the authentic promotion of a diverse range of music and artists, ensuring that more local artists would be heard, their stories and culture shared with all Australians.

3. The Centrality of the Artist (Support excellence and the special role of artists and their creative collaborators)

The musician/artist/creative are the instrument that portrays and reflects our unique and diverse culture – their contributions are central to the society; this could be seen during the pandemic when people around the globe turned to music and entertainment to distract themselves from the realities of life.

There are many excellent, creatives that make exceptional music, however, do not get the attention that many international artists receive due to the fact that the general public don't get the opportunity to hear the music, either on streaming platforms or commercial radio. The select few Australian acts that do get the opportunity to

be heard on popular streaming platforms and radio are the acts that are then able to tour nationally and internationally and contribute to the economy. Introducing a regulatory framework such as quotas places the artist at the centre and would increase the potential to elevate more artists and would impact not only the artist's careers but contribute to the music and entertainment ecosystem (live, touring, marketing, creative products, labels, publishers, publicists, visual artists, performers, dancers, music video directors, animators, music industry professionals and more). The impact of quotas would result in artists securing market development opportunities (local, national, international), greater income and diverse sources (sustainability, diversity) and sharing the excellence of Australian artists through showcasing their artistic practice, developed products and promotion of their stories.

4. Strong Institutions - strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector to contribute to national life, community wellbeing and the economy.

The opportunity to hear more Australian voices and stories across streaming platforms and radio airways will undoubtedly strengthen the Australian culture and contribute to national life. When we think back to the 1980's with the influx of Australian music on radio and in venues across the suburbs of every city in the country, we are aware of the cultural shift that happened at this time. We were no longer just listening and idolising international acts coming out of the USA and UK, but we had our very own champions to look up to! In 2022 beyond, we need this again...we need to celebrate our diverse culture, loudly and proudly!

According to the statistical snapshot report prepared by Music Australia for a music industry partnership developing a National Contemporary Music Plan, it states 'the Australian Contemporary music industry; is a multi-billion-dollar contributor to Australia's economy and culture', the industry currently contributes an estimated \$6 to \$8 billion annually to the Australian economy. (Music Australia, 2016) With these figures in mind, it is imperative to nurture and continue to develop the Australian music industry for its sustained growth within the economy. Airplay on commercial radio and on streaming platforms is a major contributing factor in an artist's career, which in turn benefits and contributes to many factors of the music industry.

When looking at the impact that support from commercial radio and streaming platforms has on different sectors of the music industry, one area of particular significance is the live music sector. It is theorized that when an artist is getting substantial airplay and streams, this will, in turn, be beneficial to the artists live performance income. Radio airplay and digital streams may not be the only way for an artist to find widespread exposure however it remains a vital link in increasing their audience, and indeed attendance at shows, which also helps develop a larger fan base and increased sales.

5. Reaching the audience to ensure Australian creativity thrives here and abroad in the digitally enabled 21st century.

To participate on a global level, Australian musical acts must compete with acts from all over the world when it comes to distinguishing themselves in an oversaturated market. To ensure that Australian artists have the opportunity to be heard and become successful in the global market, regulated support from online streaming and digital services, commercial & digital radio is required. Playing more Australian artists will also give commercial radio and streaming platforms even more content and would differentiate themselves from the global stations and content service providers, allowing Australians to hear Australian music without limitations.

Currently there are more artists across all disciplines generating creative outcomes and stimulating the cultural industries in ways never seen before. However, in recent years, digitization of music has hugely impacted global revenues and how music is consumed with Australia dropping in the global market shares and thus compounding our position as a net cultural importer, with a smaller creative sector than global peers. Regardless of the substantial number of Australian artists releasing material, an insignificant percentage of the musical acts being released each year are benefiting from commercial radio airplay and streams on digital services. As the research results demonstrate, out of an estimated 50 Australian artists receiving airplay over a one-week period, only 6 of these acts are receiving a significant amount of airplay to benefit their career, with only three acts receiving enough airplay to chart in the Top 50 singles charts.

The Australian artists that have had major support on commercial radio and on streaming platforms, have gone onto successfully touring and exporting their music internationally. These artists include a diverse range of acts over recent years including The Kid Laroi, Baker Boy, Sampa The Great, Genesis Owusu, Lime Cordiale, Courtney Barnett, Tones & I, Amy Shark, Vance Joy and many more.

Finally, I am excited to see that the Australian Government is developing a new National Cultural Policy – one that supports the creative industries and in particular the contemporary music business which is much needed in the current climate. Bringing back local content quota regulations will ensure a vibrant and prosperous music business well into the future.

Please see the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Australian Music Business Final Report, under Incentives to Use Australian Music for more details on the research conducted and the importance of supporting local content quotas.



Best Regards
Chrissie Vincent

