



**NATIONAL
ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
MUSIC OFFICE**

NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY SUBMISSION

The NATSIMO (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music Office) is an Indigenous-led initiative of APRA AMCOS and peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music creators. We support the growth and development of songwriters and composers and advocate for a thriving, self-determined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music industry.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond and provide recommendations to the new National Cultural Policy. We hope the government will continually consult with Indigenous Australians in the development of policy concerning their culture. The NATSIMO is always available to consult and work with the government on achieving positive outcomes for our First Nations music creators.

NATSIMO MISSION STATEMENT: VISION

Value - Help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to understand the value of their music to advance their careers, and advocate for their rights;

Self-determination - Promote the growth of a self-determined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music industry;

Connect - Connect our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members and the music industry whilst encouraging Best Practice;

Advance - Champion opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander songwriters and composers to advance their careers.

FIRST NATIONS FIRST

We hope the First Nations First pillar will see strong and continued investment that increases participation, employment, and career pathways for aboriginal people across the music industry.

We want to see the development and support for First Nations owned and operated music sector organisations. There is a need for First Nations owned and operated record labels, publishers, recording studios, festivals, agents and artist managers. We want the Australian First Nations music industry to be strong and independent, existing alongside and participating within the commercial industry.

INDIGENOUS CULTURAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (ICIP)

There is a strong and growing demand for Indigenous music in the entertainment industries, live, recorded, and to soundtrack film, television, and promotional content. Despite this, while First Nations musicians are participating as musicians providing cultural content for commercial projects, they are largely excluded and underrepresented in the governance of the music economy. Not enough Indigenous music that is recorded and published has had the correct rights attributed for their creations and contributions. Historically there exists a lot of music recorded inauthentically, or without the required consultations and consent to properly share Indigenous culture.

The core of the work of the NATSIMO is to address inconsistencies in the registering, licensing, and distribution of royalties. We are currently undertaking a review of current systems and structures within APRA AMCOS to address the specific needs of music creators who compose using elements of ICIP. Our aim is to create a more robust system where First Nations musicians and holders of cultural knowledge are better equipped to be in control of how their music is released into the commercial sectors.

The NATSIMO has been undertaking research and consultation into Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and music as traditional cultural expression. There is an obvious absence of infrastructure for proper consultation and the sharing of economic benefits for the recording, publishing, and licensing of music containing traditional cultural expressions.

A central issue is that Australian copyright and intellectual property laws still do not recognise communal ownership, or the relationship of an Indigenous artist as 'custodian' of culture. While the Productivity Commission is undergoing a report into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts and crafts policy, we are disappointed music is excluded from the report and recommendations.

In the meantime, producers and consumers of ICIP have only protocols to follow such as the work done by the Australia Council for the Arts (ACA) in the 'Protocols for producing Indigenous Australian music.' The ACA Protocols are a good example of Best Practice and should be widely known and followed. The NATSIMO is working to create similar protocols for APRA AMCOS licensees and members using musical works containing ICIP.

RECOMMENDATION

INVESTMENT IN MEDIA CENTRE & LABEL INFRASTRUCTURE

In response to the five pillars, **NATSIMO recommends the National Cultural Policy focus resources on infrastructure for the recording and publishing of Indigenous music.**

We envisage a framework based on the Art Centre model in the visual arts sector, for the creation, selling, distribution, and revenue of visual art sales. The Arts Centres play an important role in the success of the Indigenous art industry, now worth around \$250 million per annum. A similar investment in infrastructure is needed for the music industry for First Nations' music to realise its economic potential. There are already many First Nations musicians across Australia who are recording, releasing, and licencing their music Independently who have the skills to support the growth of this proposed business model.

FIRST NATIONS FIRST - must be First Nations led, owned, and operated. They will create many opportunities for employment, in their operation and membership.

A PLACE FOR EVERY STORY - give First Nations artists and custodians of culture a voice and means to share their stories. There is an evident demand in Australia for First Nations music, but governance and control are lacking across the various commercial sectors.

CENTRALITY OF THE ARTIST - empower First Nations artists to be in control when their culture through music is shared with Australia and the world. A focus on education and resources to make informed decisions about copyright through the publishing and commercialising of musical works and expressions of culture.

STRONG INSTITUTIONS - have a strong foundation of Indigenous led, owned, and operated good governance and Best Practice management. Government and industry to invest guidance and educational resources with the goal of autonomy.

REACHING THE AUDIENCE - contain internet and telecommunications technology to record and share content through digital media. Empowering Indigenous communities to share music, stories, and culture with Australia and the rest of the world.



INDUSTRY SUPPORT

The NATSIMO fully supports the **Australian Contemporary Music Industry Joint Submission**. We particularly endorse local content quotas and benchmarks, and a strong intellectual framework that provides for the appropriate handling of ICIP. We also endorse the creation of a 'Music Australia' body as a dedicated music agency within the government.

Financial support from the government and contemporary music industry is required for the infrastructure and resources to set up the proposed Media Centres and Labels. Ongoing investment by the commercial music sector in their own education towards best practices when collaborating with First Nations people is also needed for cross industry learnings.

The goal is empowerment and autonomy for Indigenous communities in maintaining, protecting, and sharing their culture. The NATSIMO, thanks to the financial contributions and support from APRA AMCOS, is able and committed to leading this charge.

*[HTTPS://WWW.APRAAMCOS.COM.AU/MUSIC-CREATORS/MEMBER-RESOURCES/NATIONAL-ABORIGINAL-TORRES-STRAIT-ISLANDER-MUSIC-OFFICE](https://www.apraamcos.com.au/music-creators/member-resources/national-aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-music-office)

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