

# Live Music Industry Inquiry

Submission from the South Australian Government

May 2024



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## South Australian Government Submission

### Part 1 – Introduction

#### Overview

The South Australian Government welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Live Music Industry Inquiry being conducted by The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts.

The South Australian Government acknowledges the cultural, social and economic contribution of the music industry in South Australia, and in recognition of this established the nation's first Music Development Office (MDO) in 2014. The office is led by industry specialists and has now been supporting the contemporary music ecosystem in South Australia for 10 years through a support framework consisting of funding programs and strategic initiatives.

South Australia holds the designation as a UNESCO City of Music and has had a long history of growing global talent such as The Hilltop Hoods, Electric Fields, Guy Sebastian, Tkay Maidza, and Sia, as well as industry heavyweights such as sound engineer Jon Lemon, music entrepreneur (Bee Gees Manager) Robert Stigwood, and Wonderlick Entertainment's Stu MacQueen. Additionally, South Australia has always been a thriving destination for festivals, with the likes of WOMADelaide, Spin Off and the new Harvest Rock event driving tourism and opportunities for local talent and crew, as well as contributing to the vibrancy of the state's music slate.

As of 2023:

- There were approximately 59 dedicated live music venues across the state, providing audience development opportunities for contemporary original music.
- There were 6,559 South Australian songwriters registered with APRA AMCOS, an increase of 13 per cent since 2021.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MDO led one of the first response packages in the country, administering more than \$9 million in support funding (in the 2020-21 to 2022-23 financial years) to 185 music businesses across the South Australian music industry. This funding contributed to ensuring South Australian music businesses were able to continue to operate while they pivoted and implemented diversification tactics to build resilience. South Australia did not experience closure of multiple live music venues throughout the pandemic.

In addition to this, the MDO also administered more than 3000 grants through the \$10 million See It LIVE election commitment. Announced in June 2022, the See It LIVE package focused on stimulating live music activity across the State, providing new opportunities for artists to get back on stages at events

and in live music and hospitality venues. The See It LIVE package included a range of measures including live music e-vouchers, event grants, mental health support programs, increased performance opportunities at the Royal Adelaide Show and funding for venue upgrades. It also included the establishment of a Premier's Live Music Advisory Council and a Live Music and Events Cancellation Fund.

In December 2023, two new programs were initiated as part of the See It LIVE election commitment; the \$850 000 See it LIVE Music Activation Fund and the \$50 000 Fringe it LIVE program.

These programs supported 20 venues each to host live music as they continue to face challenges arising from increased business costs and cost of living pressures on patrons.

Multiple national media outlets have reported on the continued challenges faced by the live music sector, including live music venues, festivals and events which continue to experience pressure from increased costs, public liability insurance and slow ticket buying audiences. These issues are also impacting the South Australian music industry.

The South Australian Government is developing a landmark state cultural policy due to be launched mid-2024. The new policy will align with the national cultural policy *Revive*, and complement and build on the aims of the MDO to continue to ensure the sustainability and growth of the sector.

## MDO's Core Funding Programs

The MDO supports the music industry through a range of grant programs and strategic initiatives designed to foster creative, business and industry development. This framework supports South Australian artists to develop new creative intellectual property, to build global audiences, and for skills development activities. Additionally, the MDO programs support the sustainability of local music businesses.

The programs and initiatives of the MDO include:

- **Contemporary Music Organisations Funding Program** – This program supports music organisations that align with the MDO Strategic objectives and provide accessible development pathways for South Australian musicians and music businesses across the State. Funded organisations include Music SA, South Australia's peak industry body for contemporary music, Nexus, leaders in culturally diverse and intercultural artistic practice, and Northern Sound System, who work with youth/early career music creators in the northern suburbs of Adelaide.
- **Robert Stigwood Fellowship Program** - This annual fellowship program, named after Adelaide expat Robert Stigwood, provides artists and music businesses with intensive and personalised professional development from industry mentors. The program contributes to a range of commercial outcomes for artists including, national and international publishing; recording and management deals; national headline and support bookings; increased profile nationally and internationally; and helps to facilitate new locally-owned intellectual property. This program also invests in the development of music businesses within the supply chain helping to build the local industry ecosystem. This year, seven artists, three industry fellows and four encouragement fund recipients have been selected for the program and include: indie rock band, Oscar The Wild; First Nations Songwriter, Nathan May; dance music artist, Alexander Flood; and First Nations hip hop duo, Dem Mob.

- **Project Support Grants** - Through two rounds per year, Project Support Grants provide grants of up to \$15 000 for local musicians and music businesses to develop their creative and business projects. In this financial year 31 grants have been administered to enable artists to record, market and present work, and for music businesses to develop diverse business opportunities.
- **Live Music Events Fund** – This fund invests in the development of unique music events in South Australia that generate industry development and tourism outcomes. It does this through the creation of local jobs for crew and suppliers, provides platforms for artists to perform and helps to elevate South Australia's designation as a UNESCO City of Music. This fund has supported new genre events such as heavy metal festival Froth and Fury, generated regional live music through the Adelaide Guitar Festival 'on the road', and supported the return of city-based Spin Off and Handpicked Festival in the Fleurier Peninsula after cancellations.

The MDO also supports the local music industry through the development of **Strategic Initiatives** focused on bolstering priority areas for the sector including First Nations music; skills, regional and export market development; visibility and discoverability; and include the following examples.

- **'Live and Local'** in partnership with national Live Music Office focussed on building live music capacity within key regional areas in South Australia.
- The establishment of an **Export Contribution Fund** in partnership with national export office Sounds Australia which has supported nine artists and three music industry representatives to showcase at key international events in the past 18 months.
- A free one day **Music Careers Expo** in partnership with national youth music organisation The Push providing information to young people and education/training providers on the various professions within the music industry.

## A new cultural policy for South Australia

The South Australian Government is developing a landmark state cultural policy to set a long-term vision for supporting arts, culture and creativity in South Australia that will see an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous future for all South Australians.

This Policy will be a high-level document to set a long-term vision for the arts, culture and creative industries in South Australia (for 10 years).

The Policy will build on our existing strengths, including what is unique about South Australia. Underpinning the Policy will be a delivery plan which will set out a range of short to mid-term actions to create the conditions for both government and the sector to achieve objectives. It is intended that this plan will be reviewed in consultation with sector stakeholders, at regular intervals across the duration of the overall Policy.

Key underlying principles that cut across all objectives and actions will be embedded across the Policy. These will align with the National Cultural Policy *Revive* and will reflect major themes identified through the engagement including a focus on First Nations outcomes, wellbeing, access and inclusion, and environmental considerations.

The South Australian Government has consulted with artists, creative industry practitioners, musicians, organisations and community members to contribute insights and ideas to ensure that the new cultural policy builds on our strengths and makes a meaningful contribution to South Australia and the nation. This consultation has told us that South Australians truly value our music sector, with findings including that 93% of members of the public surveyed have listened to music in the past year (a higher percentage than for any other artform).

Following the model taken by *Revive*, we will take a whole of government approach to development and delivery of the Policy, to ensure holistic and effective delivery of objectives. Involvement and collaboration will be sought from all relevant agencies and a cross-agency group will be established to support delivery of actions and to track outcomes and impact against the intent of the Policy.

The Policy will be released mid-2024.