

A NATIONAL PLAN FOR YOUNG AUSTRALIANS AND MUSIC

**THE
PUSH**

Music is for every
young person.

2026–2036

The Push – Youth Music Organisation Ltd
35 Johnston Street, COLLINGWOOD VIC 3066
PO Box 6062, COLLINGWOOD NORTH VIC 3066
(03) 9380 1277
hello@thepush.com.au

This plan is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. To view a copy of this licence, visit creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/



Acknowledgement of Country

The Push acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Lands across Australia where our work takes place and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, community and culture. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present. First Nations culture and community are integral to the way we work with young people and music.



Thank You

This plan exists because of the hundreds of young people, educators, artists, industry representatives, philanthropic partners and policy makers who shared their time, insights and lived experience across the country. From Busselton to Brisbane, your voices shaped this strategy and will continue to shape what comes next.

**EVERY
YOUNG
PERSON
CAN
PARTICIPATE
AND
THRIVE
IN
AUSTRALIAN
MUSIC**





BUILDING THE STAGE FOR YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

For four decades, The Push has worked alongside young people to ensure participation in Australian music is not left to postcode, privilege or chance.

1986	The Push starts as an initiative funded by the Victorian Government, giving local teams of young people access to drug and alcohol-free music events.
1988	The Push becomes an independent, youth-led organisation, embedding young people in governance and decision-making.
1992	5,000 young people attend the first Push Over festival in Melbourne, demonstrating that safe, alcohol-free live music can thrive.
1998	10,000 young people attend Push Over in Melbourne, reinforcing sustained demand for accessible, all-ages live music experiences.
2002	The Push’s annual training summits expand the focus from events to skills, industry knowledge and career pathways.
2008	The Push delivers annual Face The Music conference, strengthening the organisation’s role as a national convener, connecting artists, industry and young people.
2009	Following Black Saturday, The Push supports bushfire-affected communities through access to live music, reinforcing music’s role in recovery, connection and wellbeing.
2017	More than 10,000 young people attend Live At The Steps at Parliament House Victoria – a free all-ages music event that places young audiences and contemporary music within civic space.
2023	The first National Music Industry Mentoring Program connects young people from across Australia directly with industry leaders, strengthening clear and supported pathways into music careers.
2024	The first Young Australian Music Audiences research report is released, providing national data on participation, barriers, cost and access.
2025	Multi-year national partnerships demonstrate coordinated sector commitment to youth access, wellbeing and workforce development.
2026	A National Plan for Young Australians and Music launches at Parliament House, Canberra. Music is positioned as essential national infrastructure for young people’s wellbeing, education, workforce development and cultural identity.

Minister for the Arts Foreword

Arts and culture belong to everyone – no matter your background, where you live or where you go to school.

As part of the landmark national cultural policy Revive, the Australian Government is strengthening the foundations of Australian culture.

The heart of Revive is found in backing Australian artists, listening to Australian audiences and communities, and respecting the crucial place of First Nations stories, music and art.

Central to the success of Revive are the opportunities, aspirations and education of young people, and this government is committed to embedding the voices of young Australians throughout our cultural policies and programs.

This new National Plan for Young Australians and Music provides those opportunities and reflects a clear message: your age shouldn't dictate your ability to access and participate in music.

We must ensure all young Australians can access music programs that create safe and inclusive environments where they can connect and feel a sense of belonging. We know when these spaces are established, we build pathways to future careers in the creative sector and foster a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

I want young people to grow up with music all around them, I want them to be able to look back at their soundtrack to growing up in Australia and remember what it was like, how they felt and the experiences they had with music.

To have a memory connected to a song, gig or festival is one of the greatest gifts of music and something we want to encourage for all young Australians.

Music was like oxygen to me growing up. I remember classical music being played during sleep time at my preschool in Narwee, New South Wales and often conducting with my fingertips. As the years went on, I'd write my own music, first on the harmonica, then piano, then on guitar.

Music plays a powerful role in how young Australians connect with each other, express themselves, and find their place in the world. Our music is the soundtrack to life in Australia.

On 10 December 2025, the Australian Government introduced world-first social media age restrictions to protect young people from online harm.

These reforms are vital for the safety of our younger Australians; however, we see an immediate and pressing need to provide them with alternative, real world pathways to discover culture, build community and stay connected.

Young people aren't just seeking entertainment; they're seeking meaningful social connection and cultural engagement.

Music is how they hear themselves reflected and how local stories are created and shared. It builds confidence, belonging and opportunity.

This plan is an invitation to work together across government, industry, education and community.

Together, we can build a stronger future where young people and their music are celebrated.

Where every story matters, and every young voice has the opportunity to sing out—and be heard.



The Hon Tony Burke MP

Minister for the Arts
Australian Government

Why this plan exists

For 40 years, The Push has backed young Australians to find their sound, their people and their future in music.

Across four decades, we have seen the transformative role music plays in shaping identity, building confidence and strengthening communities. But we have also seen something else: access to music in Australia is too often left to chance.

Where you grow up.

Whether there is a venue in your town that allows underage people.

Whether your school offers music beyond Year 8.

Whether the industry sees young people as workers and audiences now – not just future consumers.

For too many young Australians, particularly in outer-suburban, regional and remote communities, participation depends on luck.

We are done relying on luck.

Over the past year, we have led a national co-design process to ask a simple question: What would it take to ensure every young person can participate and thrive in Australian music?

From Busselton to Brisbane, young people, educators, artists, industry leaders, philanthropists and policy makers came together to shape this vision. A clear national voice emerged.

Young Australians do not see music as a “nice to have.” They see it as a source of identity and belonging, a builder of confidence and pride, and a pathway to skills, careers and contribution. They also spoke about what happens when music is missing: narrowed opportunity, weaker connection and communities that feel less alive.

Australia knows how to back what it values. We build national pathways in sport. We train teachers at scale. We invest in infrastructure and create clear routes from participation to excellence.

Imagine if we backed music with the same clarity, commitment and national coordination.

Music must claim its rightful place in Australia’s national life.

It is as essential as education and sport. It is cultural infrastructure. It is preventative health. It is civic participation.

Digital connection matters, but it cannot replace real-world spaces where young people create, perform and belong together. Those spaces are critical to social cohesion.

In 2026, as The Push marks 40 years, this plan signals a shift. For decades we have delivered programs. Now we step forward as a system enabler – aligning partners, advocating for national reform, and helping to build a joined-up ecosystem designed deliberately and inclusively by young people.

This National Plan sets out a ten-year ambition:

Every young person can participate and thrive in Australian music.

To achieve this, change must come from the top – in schools, in government, and across industry leadership – and it must be shaped by young people themselves. Young people’s lived experience must sit at the centre of policy and investment.

This is not incremental change. It is a national movement.

A movement of young people, educators, artists, communities and partners who believe music is essential to Australia’s future.

An invitation to governments, industry, philanthropy and communities to build a music ecosystem where participation is visible, viable and accessible in every postcode.

Because pride in Australian music should not be accidental.

Belonging should not depend on geography.

And opportunity should never rely on luck.



Kate Duncan
CEO
The Push – Youth Music Organisation

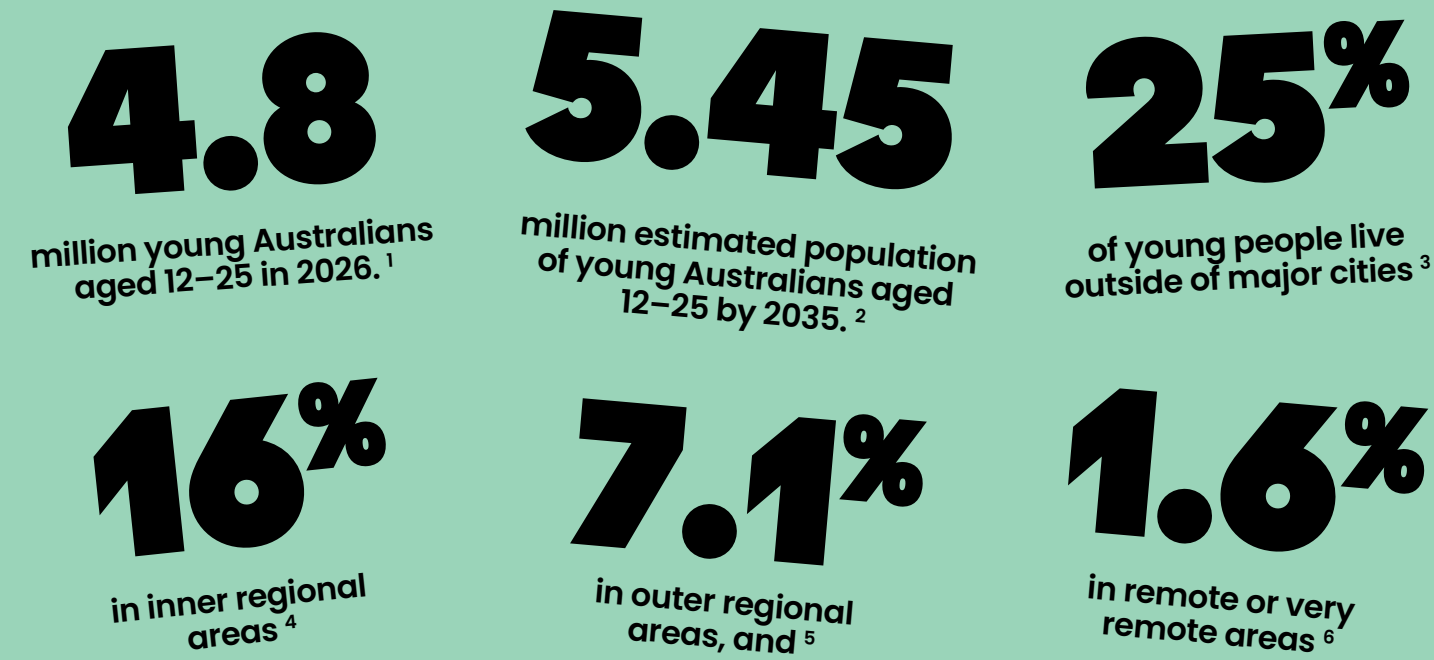


Anna Northeast
Chairperson
The Push – Youth Music Organisation



MUSIC & CHANGES LIVES

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT YOUNG AUSTRALIANS AND MUSIC



1. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Estimated Resident Population (ERP), Australia — population by single year of age. Latest release: March 2025 / 30 June 2024 age structure. Population aged 12–25 calculated by summing single-year age cohorts.

2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Estimated Resident Population (ERP), Australia — population by single year of age. Latest release: March 2025 / 30 June 2024. Calculated by summing single-year age cohorts based on assumed 1.2% annual growth (in line with ABS ERP growth rates).

3. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). Australia's youth: demographics. AIHW.

4. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). Australia's youth: demographics. AIHW.

5. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). Australia's youth: demographics. AIHW.

6. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2021). Australia's youth: demographics. AIHW.

7. Creative Australia. (2020). Creating Our Future Results of the National Arts Participation Survey.

8. Australian Children's Music Foundation (ACMF). (2025). Advocacy on music education access.

9. Creative Australia. (2020). Creating Our Future Results of the National Arts Participation Survey.

10. The Push. (2025). Young Australian Music Audiences Report.

11. The Push. (2025). Young Australian Music Audiences Report.

12. Creative Australia. (2025). National Arts Participation Survey 2022: Music fact sheet.

13. The Push. (2025). Young Australian Music Audiences Report.

Making and learning music

28% of young Australians create music⁷

33% of Australian secondary students do not have access to any school music education⁸

Listening to recorded music

95% of young Australians aged 15–24 listen to recorded music⁹

68% of young Australians aged 16–25 would like to listen to more Australian music¹⁰

Attending music events

66% of young Australians aged 15–24 attend music events⁹

63% of young Australians aged 16–25 agree that attending music events is important to them¹¹

Role of creativity in young people's lives

90% of young Australians aged 15–24 recognise the positive benefits of arts and creativity in our lives and communities¹²

Barriers to access

59% of young Australians aged 16–25 have under \$100 to spend on all forms of entertainment and activities each week¹³

PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE THIS PLAN

These principles are the non-negotiables that emerged from hundreds of conversations across the country. Over the next ten years, we'll use them to test every decision, partnership and program, and to measure whether we're moving in the right direction.

Every young person means every young person

Young people named the realities that still decide who is let in: age limits, cost, postcode, identity, safety, and who gets invited into the room in the first place. That means designing for regional, remote and underrepresented communities from the start, not as an afterthought.

Connection to Australian music strengthens communities

Young people see music as way for communities to form, where friendships are made, confidence grows, and belonging is fostered. They imagined every town having spaces to rehearse, perform and gather, just like ovals, courts or libraries. Music as everyday infrastructure that keeps communities strong and connected.

Always make Australian music the headliner

Young people have pride in Australian music and want to hear it everywhere. For young people to see a future in music, they need to see Australian artists leading the way. Stronger visibility across platforms, better policy and quotas, and more everyday moments where local music is centre stage.

Young people lead, systems must follow

Young people are already creating festivals, running labels, curating events and mentoring peers. The question is not whether they can lead, but whether systems will recognise, resource and share power with them. This means building structures that work with young people: embedding them in governance, policy, program design and evaluation.

Collaboration means we move to the same beat

No single organisation or sector can deliver this alone. Young people called for a national movement where governments, industry, education, philanthropy, community and young people work in concert around a shared purpose. Aligning investment, policy and practice so music is treated as a public good.



MUSIC IS FOR EVERY YOUNG PERSON

1

Access to music — as a participant, creator or audience member — should not depend on age, postcode, identity, cost, or chance.

Music is for every young person

Embed First Nations knowledge, perspectives, and leadership in the design, delivery, and evaluation of youth music programs.

- Increasing First Nations young people’s involvement and representation across programs and governance structures.
- Integrating cultural safety frameworks across programs, partnerships, and evaluation.
- Supporting pathways for First Nations young people’s led projects, collaborations, and mentoring.

Engage young people as co-designers and decision-makers to ensure programs reflect their needs, identities, and aspirations.

- Initiating young leaders’ programs that elevate young people for leadership opportunities.
- Embedding youth decision-making within governance and advisory structures.

Increase young people’s participation in music by unlocking opportunities, programs and partnerships across Australia, regardless of location.

- Supporting the establishment of local youth music hubs with councils and community partners.
- Establishing a national all-ages touring circuit that overcomes geographic barriers to live music access for young people.
- Expanding access to online tools and resources that make participation possible anywhere.

Remove financial barriers, ensuring that cost never stands in the way of young people accessing music.

- Positioning a Live Music Pass as a mechanism that increases affordability of all-ages events.
- Exploring an industry-supported approach (such as a ticketing contribution model) that reinvests in young people’s access and inclusion.

Remove age-based barriers so that young people aged under-18 can access music safely and confidently.

- Delivering local all-ages music initiatives that respond to the unique needs of underage young people.
- Considering an event age-classification approach that reduces systemic exclusion for under-18 audiences.



**"TALENT DOESN'T
DISCRIMINATE,
OPPORTUNITY
DOES."**

— Young person, Adelaide

Case Study

MyGigPass

Live Music Venues
Alliance

MyGigPass is a venue-led initiative from the Live Music Venues Alliance designed to connect young people with affordable live music opportunities across New South Wales. Once registered, participants receive weekly offers that can include free entry, \$25 tickets or two-for-one deals at local venues – from grassroots spaces to iconic sites. By reducing cost barriers and promoting discovery, MyGigPass helps young audiences engage with live music, strengthens relationships between venues and emerging audiences, and supports the long-term sustainability of live music culture.



MUSIC IS A REAL CAREER

Young people need clear and fair pathways from school to stage and into the broader music workforce, with skills and pay to match.

Ensure music education reflects the realities of the music industry, championing a national approach where young people learn the skills to build a sustainable career in music.

- Working with education systems nationally to support aligned music curriculum reform.
- Outlining a nationally recognised Music Pathways Map across creative, business and wellbeing capabilities.
- Broadening access to flexible, non-formal learning such as short courses and masterclasses.

Break down barriers between schools, training providers, and the music industry, establishing clear career pathways for young people.

- Enabling partnerships that provide meaningful work-integrated learning opportunities for young people.
- Using the Music Pathways Map to strengthen alignment between schools, RTOs and employers.

Support young people, parents, and educators to understand the full spectrum of music careers showing the diversity of roles and opportunities across the industry.

- Showcasing diverse career stories through national media, expos and industry-led events.
- Updating knowledge across the education workforce through contemporary professional learning.
- Providing accessible resources that outline the breadth of music career pathways.

Expand access to funding and support so young artists and industry workers can build lasting, sustainable careers in music.

- Strengthening advocacy for youth-focused funding and commissioning opportunities.
- Embedding financial capability and professional skills across all career programs.
- Supporting young people to access targeted grants that enable early-career creative development.



"MUSIC ISN'T A HOBBY, IT'S A BUSINESS AND A CAREER. TREAT IT LIKE ONE."

— Young person, Perth

Case Study

Young people in cultural governance

NSW Government

The NSW Government's Creative Communities policy (2024–2033) embeds young people directly into cultural governance. Legislative reform now requires major state cultural institutions to include a young practitioner on their boards.

Supported by the Creative Youth Network and targeted mentorship, emerging artists gain governance experience while influencing funding priorities and institutional strategy. This approach strengthens social connection and representation, ensuring cultural institutions reflect the communities they serve.

By formalising youth leadership within decision-making structures, the policy recognises that belonging, wellbeing and cultural relevance are strengthened when young people help shape the systems around them.



AUSTRALIAN MUSIC FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Australian music should be impossible to miss — on stages, in public spaces, and across platforms — so young people grow up hearing their own voices and stories.

Australian music for young audiences

Invest in young audiences by supporting new music, new ideas, and projects that connect young people with Australian music.

Establishing a future music endowment fund to enable projects, tours and festivals that grow young audiences.

Supporting youth street teams and local ambassadors to strengthen community engagement with Australian music.

Ensure young audiences can discover, share, and celebrate Australian music across platforms and media.

Partnering with broadcasters and digital platforms to support visibility, discovery and promotion of Australian artists.

Using research on young audience behaviour to shape future audience engagement strategies.

Support the music sector to deliver viable all-ages events through addressing the barriers that exist for music venues, festivals, artists and promoters.

Supporting access to all-ages grants for music venues, festivals, artists and promoters.

Considering compliance and licensing settings that make all-ages, alcohol-free events possible in existing venues.

Providing a toolkit and training that builds confidence for councils, venues and promoters.

Design for the next decade of audience participation and performance.

Exploring new venue models, formats and technologies that reflect evolving young audiences.

Sharing youth insights nationally to guide long-term policy, industry planning and investment.



**"LET'S NOT JUST
PLAY THE SAME
INTERNATIONAL HIT
EIGHT TIMES A DAY."**

— Young person, Melbourne

Case Study

One Night Stand Events Team

triple j, WA Government and The Push

In 2025, triple j partnered with WA Government, City of Busselton and The Push to deliver a local All-Ages Events Team alongside One Night Stand in Busselton.

This collaboration ensured young people were not only in the crowd, but embedded in the delivery of a major national music event. Through structured training and hands-on experience, the model strengthened regional access to Australian music and reinforced the importance of designing large-scale events with young audiences at the centre.

This model demonstrates how coordinated partnership can build sustainable regional music ecosystems, embedding training, industry exposure and real career pathways for young people, and linking local communities to national opportunity.



MUSIC MAKES PEOPLE CONNECTED AND WELL

Music must be recognised and used as social infrastructure: a powerful tool for belonging, mental health, and community cohesion.

Music makes young people connected and well

Shape a national whole of government approach recognising music as essential to young people’s wellbeing and social cohesion.

- Establishing a National Youth Music Taskforce with representatives from music, youth, health, social cohesion and education sectors to develop a shared agenda.
- Advocating for music to be embedded across public health, youth and social cohesion frameworks.
- Co-designing shared wellbeing indicators with national arts, health and education agencies.
- Sharing evidence and insights through a coordinated national research series.

Put young people’s wellbeing at the heart of Australia’s music ecosystem, ensuring music is recognised and used as a powerful tool for connection and inclusion.

- Developing a National Health and Wellbeing Framework for music aligned with youth mental health priorities.
- Partnering with researchers to deepen evidence on music participation and wellbeing.
- Advancing environmental sustainability across the music sector as a contributor to health, wellbeing and inclusion.

Grow place-based music programs that build confidence, friendship, and belonging, making participation simple and social for every young person.

- Working with local governments and community organisations to integrate music participation into health, wellbeing and community planning.
- Establishing best practice approaches to youth music engagement.
- Partnering with sport, recreation and library networks to embed music as part of everyday community life.



**"IF A CONCERT CAN
REMINDE SOMEONE THEY
ARE ALIVE, WHY ISN'T
MUSIC TREATED AS
ESSENTIAL?"**

— Young person, Sydney

Case Study

Amplify

(formerly FReeZA)
Victorian Government

For more than two decades, the Victorian Government has backed youth-led music through Amplify (formerly FReeZA). The program supports young people across metropolitan, regional and rural communities to design and deliver live music events in safe, all-ages spaces. Young people are producers and decision-makers, not just participants.

Through sustained investment, Amplify has normalised access to live music for young audiences and embedded youth leadership in local cultural infrastructure. It demonstrates what happens when participation is designed deliberately: music becomes visible, accessible and community-based, not something young people stumble upon, but something built for them.

EVERY
HEADLINER
STARTS
IN THE
CROWD

DELIVERING THIS PLAN



This plan sets a national direction. What happens next depends on all of us.

No single organisation can deliver this alone. Real change requires alignment across education, industry, philanthropy, communities and government — with young people leading the way.

For educators: Connect classrooms to real-world music careers and make the full spectrum of opportunity visible.

For industry: Remove barriers and create viable all-ages events and early-career pathways.

For governments: Recognise music as essential infrastructure in policy and investment.

For philanthropy and partners: Back long-term systems change, not short-term fixes.

For communities: Champion spaces where young people can create, gather and belong.

Young people shaped this plan. Young people must lead its delivery.

The ambition is national. The responsibility is shared. The opportunity is now.

Together, we can ensure every young person can participate and thrive in Australian music.

**THE PUSH
.COM.AU**



 / thepushau

 / thepushau

 @ thepushau

 @ thepushau