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Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Committee,

Supporting Australian Stories on our Screens – Options Paper

We refer to the call for submissions responding to the 'Supporting Australian Stories on our Screens' Options Paper, which considers the role of, and possible changes to, local content quotas on Australian screens. Although ARIA is not providing specific responses about the models and questions presented in the Options Paper, we thank you for the opportunity to comment on what is an equally important issue for the Australian recorded music industry.

Background to ARIA

ARIA is the peak trade body for the recorded music industry in Australia. It is a national industry association proactively representing the interests of its members.

ARIA has more than 100 members ranging from small "boutique" labels typically run by 1-5 people, to medium sized organisations and very large companies with international affiliates. ARIA is active in many key areas of the music industry including:

- acting as an advocate for the industry, both domestically and internationally;
- supporting Australian music, and creating opportunities to help it be heard;
- playing an active role in protecting copyright and making submissions to government on copyright reform, piracy, regulation and other issues where it has the information and expertise to do so;
- collecting statistical information from members and retailers and compiling numerous ARIA charts with data provided by retailers and data suppliers across the country;
- providing, in certain cases, a reproduction licensing function for various copyright users; and
- staging the highly prestigious annual ARIA Awards.

ARIA's primary objective is to advance the interests of the Australian recording industry. The role of ARIA is not to monitor, supervise or intervene in the pricing or other commercial decisions of its members.



The Importance of Australian Content on Screen and Radio

ARIA believes that having locally produced content on our screens makes an important contribution to the cultural landscape and growth of a unique Australian identity. Local content quotas have an ongoing essential role in ensuring this production. This is even more important as Australia's content-creation industries face an uncertain future and significant economic losses caused by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If local content quotas for television are reduced or eliminated, we are likely to see a reduction in the number of Australian stories on our screens and a subsequent loss of jobs in the television and film industries. These risks would also extend to the Australian music industry. Australian composers and recording artists form an important part of the ecosystem of the Australian screen industry. A reduction in locally produced programming would undoubtedly lead to a loss of opportunity for Australian composers and recording artists to have their work showcased on screens in front of Australian and potentially global audiences.

The importance of Australians having access to local content extends beyond the audiovisual medium. It is equally important that Australians are able to hear Australian music by Australian artists on their favourite radio station or music streaming service. The requirement under section 5 of the Commercial Radio Code of Practice which ensures that commercial radio stations play a proportion of local content, remains a critical part of the Australian music ecosystem. It provides an important means of showcasing emerging Australian artists, provides an opportunity for them to engage with and build audiences, and ensures that Australian voices continue to be heard.

ARIA is grateful for the opportunity that has been provided by the Committee to participate in this inquiry, and we would welcome the chance to provide further comments or assistance if requested.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line.

Dan Rosen
Chief Executive Officer