



musicNT
your music office

Strategic Plan 2025-2029



Contents

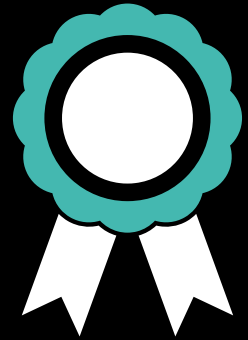
Executive summary	5
Stakeholder map	7
The Landscape	8
Strategy on a page	12
Pathways for musicians	14
Equitable access to music and music-making	16
Strong Territory ecosystem	17
Leadership, voice and influence	18
Relevance, strength and viability	19
Acknowledgements	20

Achievements

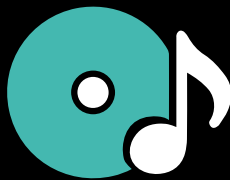
Improved financial sustainability
with 18% of income driven through self-generated activities and non-government supporters



MusicNT recognised and respected
for considered and informed contributions to national industry discussions



Launch of Soundtrack to the Outback,
digitally showcasing local talent



Appointment of the first Aboriginal Chairperson
to MusicNT's Board



Improving safety
for all at live events through delivery of the **All Good Project**



New Alice Springs office providing **improved spaces and programs**
to facilitate access to music and artist development



Multi-year investment
into remote music



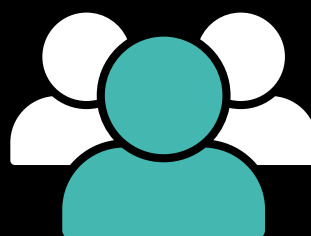
Development and funding of Remote Music Rangers



Establishment of **annual gender equity reporting**



WIM Committee established



NT Industry Code of Conduct established



Executive summary

MusicNT is the Northern Territory's peak music industry body, facilitating the development of musicians, the industry and audiences, leading the cultural change that underpins a sustainable industry, and providing a compelling voice for the multifaceted benefits of access to music and music making.

MusicNT exists for all music makers, lovers and supporters in the Northern Territory, across a diverse range of cultures, ages, communities and regions. MusicNT's role encompasses each of these, serving to improve the quality of the Northern Territory's music industry and to increase awareness among the broader industry and audiences of Territory music.

MusicNT influences and develops initiatives for a connected and inclusive Territory music industry, establishing itself as the music office for all music genres in the Northern Territory. MusicNT is the go-to-place for government, business and other industries to connect with and understand the complexity of the Territory's music scene.

The Northern Territory is a melting pot of cultures, rich with language, stories, song lines, dance and artistic expression. MusicNT has received National recognition by rethinking the way that musicians, music professionals and audience's access and engage with the music industry. Against a backdrop of a geographically, culturally and socio-economically dispersed population, MusicNT has created programs and facilitated pathways to bring the Territory's unique music into the spotlight, and in doing so has enabled a thriving music scene that audiences connect with.

MusicNT has leaned into the challenging industry conversations that have emerged in recent years and has implemented programs that lead change towards a more sustainable industry. The All Good Program has been developed and delivered to enhance safety for artists and audiences at live music events. After preparing and releasing an extensive report on the position of NT women in music in 2021, MusicNT has also continued its programs supporting women in music, and since 2022 released an annual Gender Equity Report analysing this across its programs and encouraging others in industry to do the same.

MusicNT has cause for celebration and reflection over the coming 5 years, with a number of milestone events on the horizon:



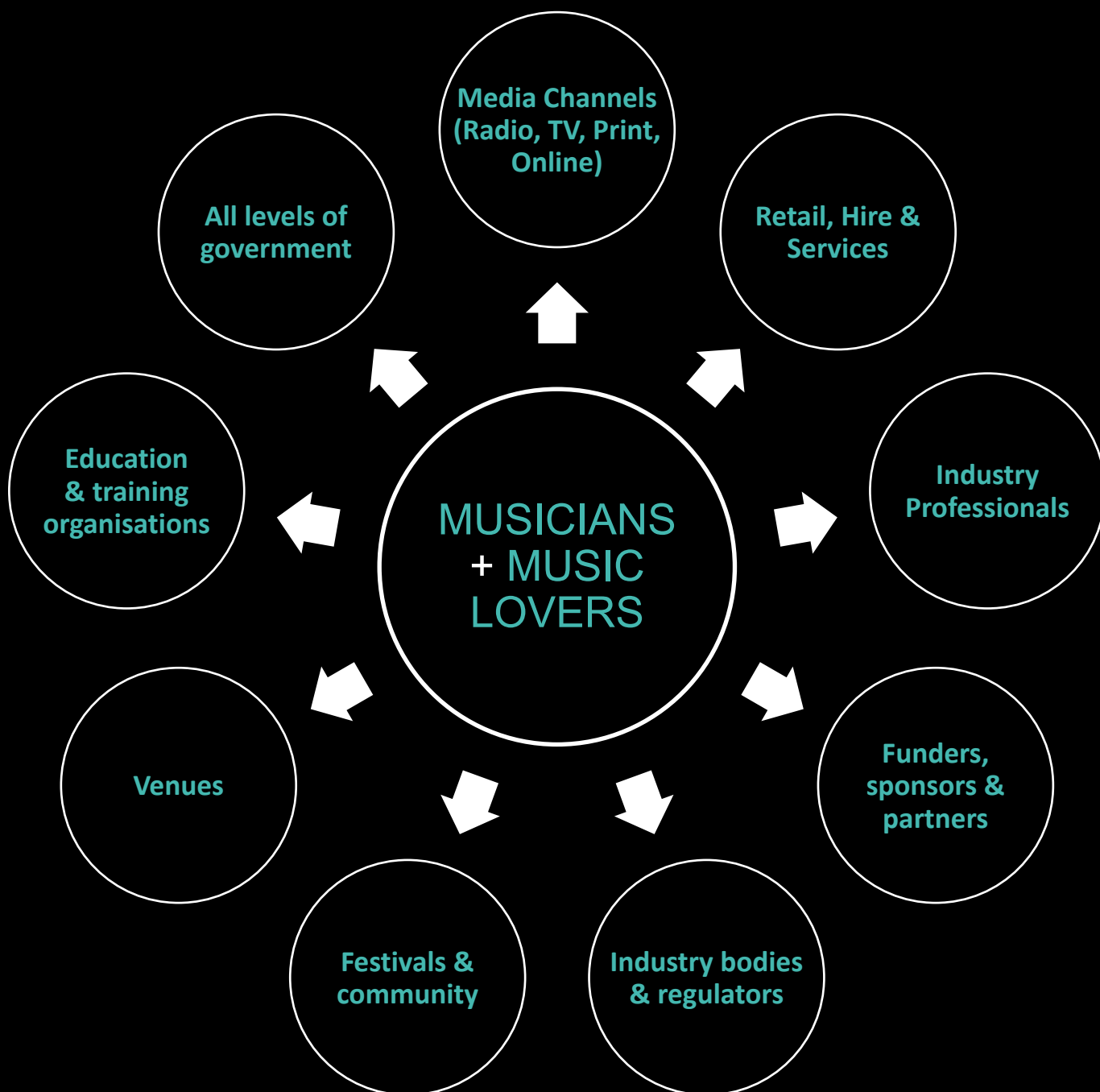
These events provide the opportunity to celebrate how far the Territory music industry has come under MusicNT's leadership and provides reason to rise to the challenge of expanding our reach in the years ahead.

MusicNT is therefore focused on driving continued collaboration across the industry, providing leadership to enhance music accessibility, developing partnerships to expand culturally appropriate music making in-place, and developing additional programs to support emerging artists to advance their careers.





Stakeholders



Landscape

The Territory offers a unique and sometimes challenging operational landscape for the music industry. However, firstly it must be acknowledged that these challenges are amplified by the systemic barriers that affect Indigenous people both within and beyond the industry, including inequality of pay, representation and availability and accessibility of services.

Remoteness

Physical remoteness is a significant barrier in the continuing growth of musicians and the music industry – remoteness of the Northern Territory from the rest of the country as well as remoteness of musicians writing and performing in small communities across a vast region. Technology, including access to the NBN, and music development initiatives targeting remote communities contribute to addressing isolation. However, the costs and resources to ensure access are significant.

Whilst the richness and diversity of culture and language is the Territory's most significant artistic asset, it also creates added complexity in the context of 'remoteness'. The remoteness created by a great number of different cultures and languages within a single jurisdiction impacts the design and delivery of programs and requires a greater focus on place-based programming solutions than might be the case in other jurisdictions.

The economics of the Music industry in the Northern Territory

Live music in the Northern Territory was found to have high return on investment by the Economic and Cultural Value of Live Music in the Northern Territory report in 2018, with a 4.39:1 benefit to cost ratio. The whole of Australia was estimated at 3.1:1 in 2015. This report has not been updated since it was first delivered, however in light of significant improvement in results of live music revenue and attendance in the Northern Territory, it is likely the current return has also increased.

Earning a livable income

In 2018, the Economic and Cultural Value of Live Music in the Northern Territory report found that live music-making in the Northern Territory is estimated to enable over 200 full-time and part-time jobs and is worth approximately \$74 million to the Territory economy. These figures were later reflected in the Creative Industries Strategy NT 2020 – 2024, which disaggregated the creative industries to report total output, value add and employment by sub-sector. Combining the Performing Arts and Music Composition & Publishing sub-sectors, the total output plus value add was \$74.3m and full-time equivalent employment of 171 roles.

These reports have not been refreshed since their original publication. However, with limited venue and audience capacity, Territory artists are typically unable to build capital for recording and touring through gigging. The additional challenges of regional touring often has significant impact on financial return for touring artists. Because of this, Northern Territory musicians often relocate to Melbourne or Sydney, at least part time, to pursue music careers. The broader music industry has seen significant negative impact on artists' ability to earn income due to streaming services, such as Spotify. Nationally, the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) have established a 'floor' on conditions within the music industry and fair fees and rates for performances so that there are standards applying to professional musicians when they perform commercially. However, this is yet to gain application more broadly than government funded events.

Live performance and touring

According to the Live Performance Australia (LPA) Report (2021), the Northern Territory experienced the highest growth of any Australian jurisdiction for both attendance and spend at live performance events (which was likely due to events proceeding in the Territory, whilst other Australian jurisdictions had ceased performances through COVID). After a slump in 2020 due to COVID, total Territory attendance and spend reached their highest levels on record, totalling \$5.3m and 123,932 respectively. Measured as a growth against 2019 (to eliminate the outlier nature of 2020), these figures represented growth of 98% in revenue and 91% in attendance. The growth in the NT, and reduction in activity in other jurisdictions facilitated a reset in alignment of spend per person, with \$21.05 spent per person on live performance events in the Territory, against a national average of \$26.35 per person (although closer to national average, the Territory's per person spend remains the lowest across all jurisdictions). Ticket sales were predominantly driven through festivals, including Darwin Festival and Bass in the Grass..

The Territory's live music sector experiences high performance costs due to the relatively small population, seasons and significant distance between centres. Previous touring programs in the Territory have seen some success but suffer from inconsistent funding support and overall, require subsidies in order to be viable.

Mental health, safety and well-being

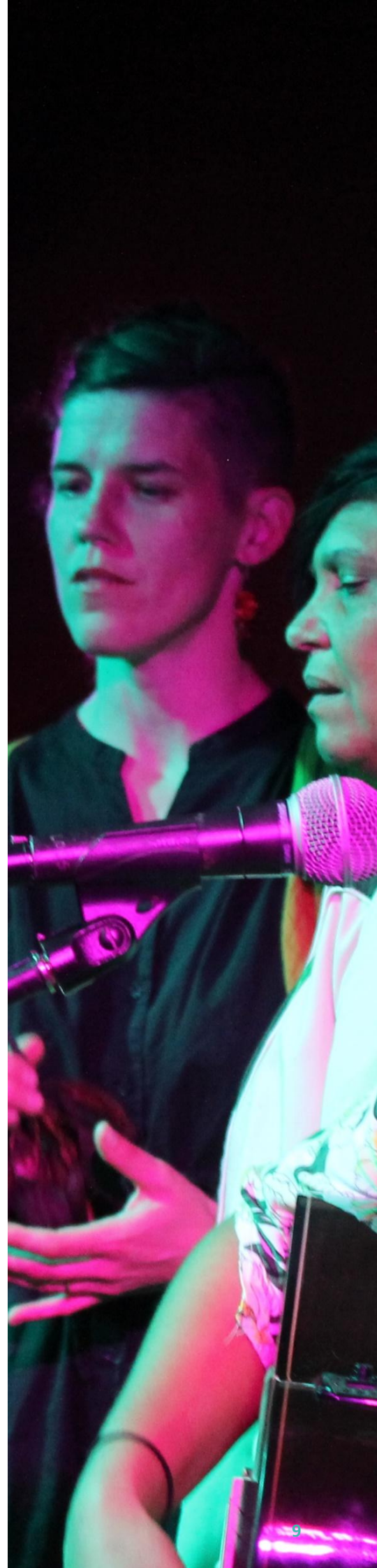
In 2022 the Australian Contemporary Music Industry published the Raising Their Voices report following a review into sexual harm, sexual harassment, bullying and systematic discrimination in the music industry. The data within the report revealed widespread risk, inequality and discrimination for many. Overall, women and diverse, marginalised groups are more likely than men to suffer sexual harassment and bullying. Whilst the music industry appreciates the need for change, change is challenging with a large number and diversity of workplaces, including high proportion of freelance work, 'gig economy' workers and small organisations. The industry is also characterised by a lack of job security, and a deep passion for development of music, which was hypothesised as potentially leading to acceptance of poor behaviour.

Community participation

Analysing data from the Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Incorporated's (ACSPRI) 2019 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AuSSA), the Australia Council for the Arts published Widening the Lense in 2023. The report identifies the ways in which income, education, occupation, geography, self-identified class and trust in society interact with cultural participation in the arts.

Although applicable to the arts sector more broadly, the themes emerging from the report support the challenges and degree of disadvantage experienced by peoples living in remote parts of the Northern Territory in their access to music. Indicators for reduced access included lower levels of education, lower levels of income, and regional and remote living.

Live music provides a sense of belonging and connectedness in communities; bringing people together across age, culture and ability. With the dispersed Territory population and regional remoteness, music in community offers opportunities for growth, connection and inclusivity. There has been growth within regional and remote community festivals in the Northern Territory and they continue to provide supportive platforms bringing together musicians and audiences.





Venue safety

Venue-based live music is an incubator for emerging artists and performers and is often the first step in furthering an artist's career, including internationally. Concerns for safety of performers and patrons attending live music events has seen an increase in attention in recent years. The Your Choice movement has demonstrated this on a national scale, incorporating major industry players to create a culture of positive behaviour in the live music industry. The All Good Project, developed and delivered by MusicNT, is aims to create safer spaces for staff, performers and patrons at live music venues across the Northern Territory. The All Good Project includes a Code of Practice for live music venues in the Territory which is included on the MusicNT website. Whilst early acceptance of the All Good Program has been positive, MusicNT will still continue to focus on expanding its delivery to create genuine and sustained cultural change over time. This initiative is likely to be bolstered by the development of a National Code of Practice through changes announced as part of the new National Cultural Policy.

Women in music

On International Women's Day 2021, MusicNT released the You Gotta See It To Be It: Strategic Directions for NT Women In Music available on its website. The report was MusicNT's inaugural report into gender equity across MusicNT, its programs and its initiatives, and called out areas of persistent marginalisation of women in music, leading to the identification of priority areas that require ongoing or increased action to overcome. Since release of the report, MusicNT has established the Women In Music Committee and the NT Industry Code of Conduct. Whilst initiatives within the All Good Project provide a supportive environment for industry-wide improved behaviours, further persistent and deliberate investment in initiatives to achieve gender parity is required to ensure women genuinely have equal opportunity to participate and be recognised in the music industry.

Education

Music education from the earliest years through all stages of schooling is fundamental to the sustainability of a vibrant music ecology and industry. The impact of music in schools on student attendance, achievement, social skills and wellbeing has been demonstrated through many studies notably 'Music to Our Ears' (Music Council of Australia 2013). For Indigenous children in remote schools in the Northern Territory, music is a critical element for promoting success, engagement and well-being as well as providing real career pathways in the music industry. Despite these benefits, there is limited access to consistent high quality music education across the Territory, particularly in remote communities. There is also no publicly available data to map the investment in school music education and its ongoing impact on students, communities and the music industry.



Strategy on a page

PURPOSE

Championing the artistic, cultural, social and economic value of Northern Territory music, to grow and develop the Northern Territory music industry

VISION

A thriving Northern Territory music scene

VALUES

Access and Equity

Powerful Partnerships

Engagement

Transparency

Innovation

Organisational Sustainability

PRIORITIES

Pathways for Musicians

Musician development is a journey and requires navigation of the industry to access the right support at the right time.

Successful implementation of this priority would see alignment between the musician journey and supporting programs, including facilitated connections and mentor support to assist artists in navigating their journey.

Equitable access to music and music making

The Northern Territory is a melting pot of cultures, rich with language, stories, song lines, dance and artistic expression. Against a backdrop of a geographically, culturally and socio-economically disperse population MusicNT seeks to drive inclusion and equitable access to music and music-making for all Territorians.

Successful implementation of this priority would see improved access to music for all Territorians from a young age, and increased exposure to music-making opportunities in place.

Strong Territory eco-system

A strong music industry requires the coming together of audiences, venues, artists, industry professionals, retail and hire services, media, and sponsors to create platforms from which music can be shared.

Successful implementation of this priority would see a connected and collaborative industry, collectively and respectfully creating and showcasing Territory music.

Leadership, voice and influence

MusicNT has an important role to play in elevating the voices and rights of Territory-based industry participants in public and policy making arenas, and in the public display of leadership in the big issues impacting the music industry.

Successful implementation of this priority would see MusicNT invited and participating in National forums, influencing policy makers and providing industry leading frameworks.

Relevance, strength and viability

To best support a thriving music industry, MusicNT needs to be a viable and sustainable organisation that maintains relevance with its members and external stakeholders.

Successful implementation of this priority would see MusicNT hold strong connectivity and two-way communication with members, thereby enabling insightful participation in external forums. It would see development and implementation of plans to secure long term funding and succession plans at Board and operational levels.

Detailed strategic plan

GOALS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

VALUES

Access and Equity

We deliver services with a focus on inclusion and equity of access, to provide supportive opportunities for musicians across the region.

Powerful Partnerships

We work together with musicians, government, industry and other stakeholders to develop connections and powerful partnerships that provide opportunities and music experiences in the Northern Territory.

Engagement

We foster open dialogue with our members - the local, regional, national and international music industry - and our other stakeholders.

Transparency

We respect good practice and are transparent in our decision-making processes.

Innovation

We recognise the importance of using new technology and creative approaches to facilitate access to music across the Northern Territory, and to deliver Northern Territory music to the rest of the world.

Organisational Sustainability

We acknowledge the importance of income generation for musicians and the need for MusicNT to operate strategically to ensure organisational sustainability.

Pathways for musicians

Musician development is a journey and requires navigation of the industry to access the right support at the right time.

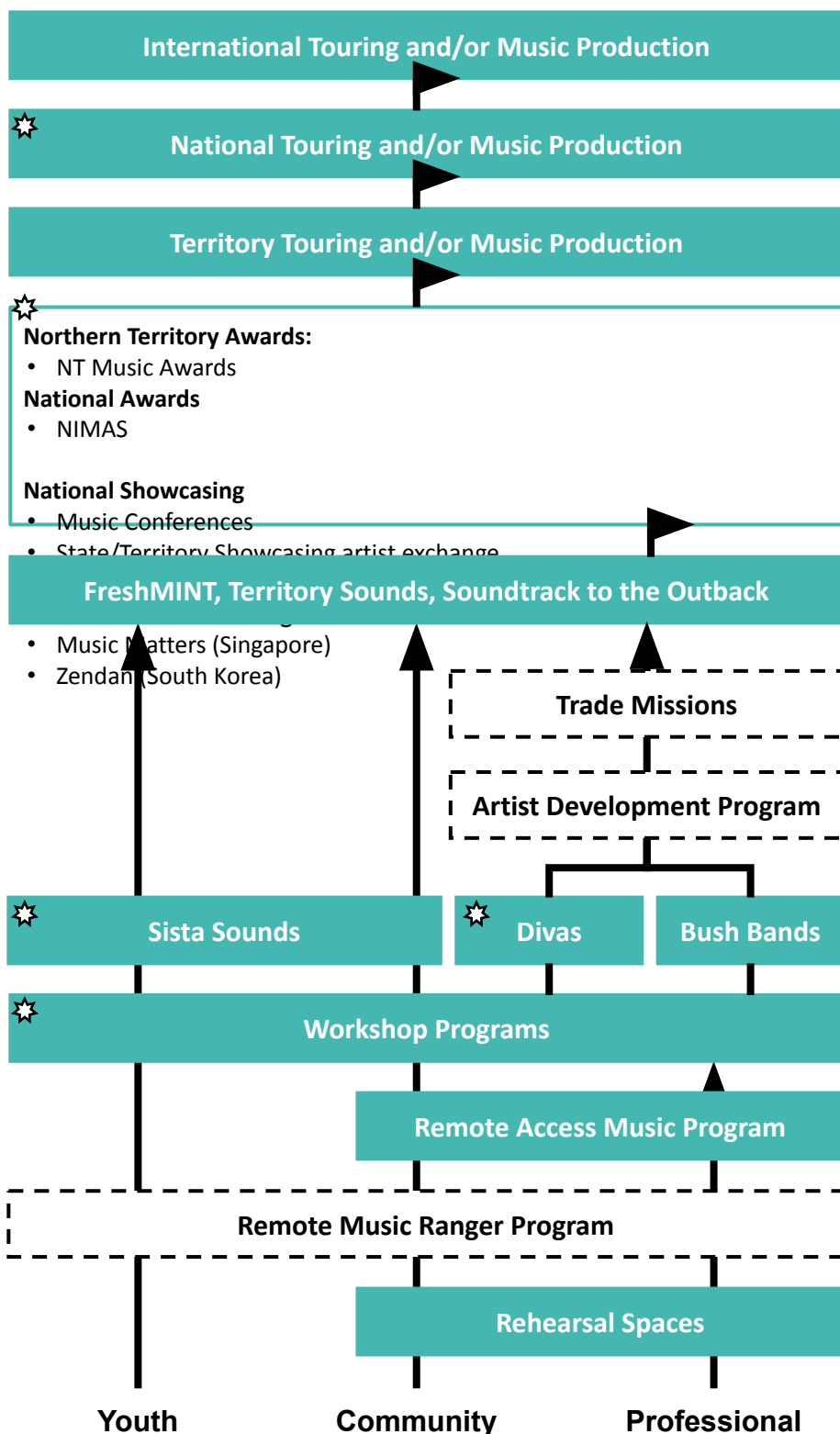
Successful implementation of this priority would see alignment between the musician journey and supporting programs, facilitated connections and mentor support to assist artists in navigating their journey.

Existing initiatives:

- Partnerships: Legal line
- Projects: Sista Sounds, Bush Bands, Divas, Workshops, Rehearsal Spaces, Music Writers Program, Alice Springs Instrument Library
- Events: MusicNT hosted conference

New initiatives:

- Linking with MusicNT's membership database, MusicNT will develop and maintain a music industry directory for the benefit of members.
- MusicNT will develop and implement an artist development program aimed at assigning an artist to a mentor who helps them create and follow a 12-month career development plan. For First Nations performers this program will include supportive strategies for enhancing cultural expression, writing and performing with diverse language and linguistics.
- MusicNT will develop a schedule of annual trade missions into southern states, where record-ready artists can be introduced and showcased to industry interstate to facilitate transition to the next stage of their careers.
- MusicNT will develop a database and regular dialogue with Remote Music Rangers to ensure that rangers are sufficiently informed about the broader Territory music industry, and therefore readily able to assist artists in the regions to connect into the broader Territory industry as appropriate to their stage in their music career.
- MusicNT will work with the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade and other agencies to strengthen connections with music industry in Asia to provide additional pathways for musicians given physical proximity to the Northern Territory.



✦ Denotes All Good Project content within program.

The All Good Project is both a value system around safety for all at live music venues across the Northern Territory, and a contributor of values-based safety content delivered through programs flagged above.

LEGEND

Existing

New



Equitable access to music and music-making

The Northern Territory is a melting pot of cultures, rich with language, stories, song lines, dance and artistic expression. Against a backdrop of a geographically, culturally and socio-economically dispersed population MusicNT seeks to drive inclusion and equitable access to music and music-making for all Territorians.

Successful implementation of this priority would see improved access to music for all Territorians from a young age, and increased exposure to music-making opportunities in place.

Existing initiatives:

- Partnerships: Music in Education Working Group (CDU, NT Music School, NT Department of Education), NT Government (LGANT), PAW Media, Barkly Regional Arts, ALPA
- Programs: Remote Areas Music Program, Remote Music Ranger Program, Membership, existing social media communications for members and remote access to content.
- Events: Local concerts leveraging Remote Stage Plan with artists through Remote Music Rangers and Remote Areas Music Program.

New initiatives:

- MusicNT understands the importance of partnering to expand its reach into the regions and remote areas of the Northern Territory to drive improved access to music and music-making opportunities. Focus will be on development of programs for rollout through delivery partners, including Land Councils, Local Government Authorities, educational institutions and Aboriginal Corporations.
- Leveraging presence in communities, MusicNT will develop a framework for data gathering to enable program staff in communities to contribute towards community audits. Information will be centrally collected, and used to inform future programming for improved access across the Northern Territory.
- Leverage NT Music Archives collection to drive place-based applicability in programs delivered in the regions.
- MusicNT will seek to identify and support pathways to deliver music programs to young people.
- MusicNT will work with remote delivery partners to progress the usage of the Remote Stage Plan to drive opportunities for collaboration and performance in place.
- Expansion of workshop programs to deliver in a regional outreach format.

Strong Territory ecosystem

A strong music industry requires the coming together of audiences, venues, artists, industry professionals, retail and hire services, media, and sponsors to create platforms from which music can be shared.

Successful implementation of this priority would see a connected and collaborative industry, collectively and respectfully creating and showcasing Territory music.

Existing initiatives:

- Hosting musician platforms: FreshMiNT, Soundtrack to the Outback, Territory Sounds,
- Partnerships: DFAT, Northern Territory Government, industry bodies, NT Festivals Alliance
- Projects: All Good Project
- Events: NT Music Awards, NIMAs

New initiatives:

- Review audience engagement with the NT Music Awards and Territory Sounds.
- Encourage participation of Territory music ecosystem in development of content for NT Music Archives (Wiki for NT Music).
- Seek opportunities for showcase exchange opportunities, delivered through artist exchange.
- Investment to improve development, production, recording and sharing of events for livestreaming.
- Leverage NT Music Archives to create exhibition opportunities and curated digital tours.
- MusicNT will develop internal tools to assist its staff in empowering industry participants to have difficult, yet productive conversations around observed behaviours as increased awareness of proper industry behaviour emerges through delivery of the All Good Project.



Leadership, voice and influence

MusicNT has an important role to play in elevating the voices and rights of Territory-based industry participants in public and policy making arenas, and in the public display of leadership in the big issues impacting the music industry.

Successful implementation of this priority would see MusicNT invited and participating in National forums, influencing policy makers and providing industry leading frameworks for better.

Existing initiatives:

- Partnerships: Creative Australia, APRA (AMCOS & NATSIMO), Australian Music Industry Network.
- Reference Groups: Women in Music Committee, Indigenous Women in Music Program Reference Group
- Publications: NT Live Music Strategy, Remote Music Strategy, Annual Gender Equity Reports, You Gotta See it To Be It Report (2021)
- Events: International Women's Day celebrations, release of annual Gender Equity reports.

New initiatives:

- Reinvigorate a strong NT Music Industry Council. The opportunities and benefits of music are multifaceted and cut across a range of sectors. A strong Music Industry Council would serve to elevate opportunities to partner with other sectors to create a stronger voice and diverse and new opportunities that will benefit both artists and the industry. Key participants include MusicNT, Hospitality NT, Tourism NT, NT Major Events Company.
- Host an international music conference in Darwin. All Good Project themes to guide conference content.
- Lead development of the Northern Territory's next iteration of the NT Music Strategy.
- Advocate for and participate in the development of the NT Festivals Strategy, with insights provided through the All Good Project.
- Leverage REVIVE to elevate MusicNT and core programs to more prominent positions nationally.
- Leverage the Women in Music Committee to drive new initiatives identified in You Gotta See It To Be It: Strategic Directions for NT Women in Music, to enhance the opportunity for women to participate equitably and be recognised in music.
- Leveraging Remote Music Ranger forums to inform messaging to Government about improved music access and culturally safe program delivery across the Territory.

Relevance, strength and viability

To best support a thriving music industry, MusicNT needs to be a viable and sustainable organisation that maintains relevance with its members and external stakeholders.

Successful implementation of this priority would see MusicNT hold strong connectivity and two-way communication with members, thereby enabling insightful participation in external forums. It would see development and implementation of plans to secure long term funding and succession plans at Board and operational levels.

Existing initiatives:

- Partnerships: Commonwealth Government, Local Government and Regional Councils
- Initiatives: Localised social media groups

New initiatives:

- MusicNT will establish a State of the Territory summit, leveraging existing and new networks to improve voice into MusicNT and beyond.
- MusicNT will seek to find partners in AMIN network who are willing to participate in peer-to-peer learning through improved interjurisdictional networks at all levels.
- Review existing social media platforms for relevance and interconnectivity including consistency in messaging. Explore new opportunities to leverage these platforms to achieve MusicNT's objectives.
- Strengthen organisational governance at Board level through enhancement of the Board Charter, development of Board calendar and ensuring regular review and assessment of board skills mix for alignment with organisational need.
- Approach access to funding more strategically with partners to drive improved success for grass roots programming.
- Leverage respected contributions to national discussions to encourage longevity in funding arrangements.
- Seek new sponsors and philanthropic partners.



Acknowledgements

STRATEGIC PLAN CREDITS

Plan developed by MusicNT Board and Staff in conjunction with Thrive Territory.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING PARTNERS



MusicNT

Darwin office

Street: Level 2, 8 McMinn Street, Darwin NT 0800

Postal: PO Box 4016, Darwin NT 0801

P: (08) 8981 1995

E: info@musicnt.com.au

Alice Springs office

Street: Old Courthouse, 27 Hartley Street, Alice Springs 0870

Postal: PO Box 8545, Alice Springs NT 0871

P: (08) 8952 0322

E: liz@musicnt.com.au

www.musicnt.com.au

musicNT
your music office