

# Federal Government Finally Releases National Cultural Policy to Mixed Response

Network of music teachers in Australia offers critical analysis of the new policy, and what it means to current and future musicians.

Perth, WA, April 18, 2013 - The Federal Government recently released the new National Cultural Policy, called Creative Australia. Under the new policy, the creative arts will receive a total of \$235 million over the next 10 years. The largest expenditure will be \$75 million to help overhaul the Australian Council for the Arts, which currently oversees music grants. Simon Crean, Minister for the Arts, describes the program as a "policy that sees the artist at the centre of creativity," and one that is "crucial to the nation's future." Crean further describes Creative Australia as "a vision that says we have to invest in the artist." Crean sees competitiveness and economic development as crucial to furthering the arts. Aside from the \$75 million allocated for the overhaul of the Australian Council for the Arts, another \$20.8 million will go to not-for-profit training organisations, such as the National Academy of Music, the Australian Youth Orchestra, and an \$8.1 million project called Creative Young Stars. Creative Young Stars will allow MP's to hold local talent contests, with grants being awarded to the winners. Contemporary music will receive funds as well. Sounds Australia will receive \$1.75 million to "to help grow domestic and export markets," and another \$1.25 million for "career pathways for musicians." Over the next four years, \$2.4 million will go to the Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (AMRAP), an initiative to ensure that more Australian music is played on the radio. Despite Crean's optimism, and the amount of money pledged to the arts over the next 10 years as part of Creative Australia, some in the music business are concerned that the money may not go where it is truly needed. According to John Wardle, a well-known live music activist, "I can understand the relentless cynicism from musicians, because they've been left out of the process for so long." Wardle feels that the program will help provide a good infrastructure for advancement of the arts, particularly Australian music, but acknowledges that there won't be a lot of money going directly into the hands of current artists. Dr. Ianto Ware, the National Live Music Coordinator, is very happy with the initiative, especially its mission "to cut the red tape" and make it easier to produce and perform live music in Australia. Dr. Ware feels that current regulations such as "planning and regulatory rules" are detrimental and create barriers to the live music scene in Australia. Danny Achurch, musician, teacher, and owner of Monster Music, sees Creative Australia as a great development, especially for future musicians: "As a musician and teacher, many of my friends and former students are also in the music business. While I would prefer to see a little more of the money go toward helping those who are playing music right now, there is still a lot being done for current musicians, and this new policy could virtually ensure the future of Australian music." Achurch concluded, "Today's children, taking their guitar, drum, piano, and singing lessons, are going to have a lot better chance at success than many in my generation did. If you love music, there has never been a better time in Australian history to take music lessons." Monster Music is a network of music teachers based in Perth, also serving Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, and most cities across Australia. They specialise in making music fun to learn. For more information, their website can be found here: <http://www.monstermusic.com.au/> or you may also call them at 08 9335 8881.

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