



MEDIA RELEASE – for immediate release

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AWARD WINNING MUSICIANS DEMAND THE GOVERNMENT RESTORES FUNDING TO THE AUSTRALIAN MUSIC RADIO AIRPLAY PROJECT (AMRAP)

“It is essential that Amrap remains funded by the government so that they can continue to help musicians be heard on community radio” – six time ARIA Award winner, John Butler

As the music industry gathers on Thursday for the annual ARIA Awards; past winners and music industry heavyweights are urging the Federal Government to ensure that community radio can continue to access new Australian music for airplay through Amrap.

Amrap was funded by Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) and is managed by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) to gather up and distribute new Australian music to community radio stations. Over 4.4 million Australians (25% of radio listeners) tune to community radio every week and since inception Amrap has facilitated a 5% jump in Australian music airplay on community radio nationally, to a new average of 37%. Currently over 3,000 Australian musicians and 1,500 broadcasters from 300 radio stations rely on Amrap to get new Australian music to the airwaves.

An independent review of Amrap commissioned by the DBCDE in 2011 returned positive results but the Federal Government failed to renew the four-year \$600,000 PA funding term for Amrap in the 2012 Federal Budget. Since July the Communications Minister, Senator Stephen Conroy, has stated that “the government is investigating a range of options for the project’s continuation”, but current reserves run out at the end of the year, and Amrap urgently requires a funding commitment from the government so hundreds of community radio broadcasters can continue to access new Australian music for airplay.

Six-time ARIA Award winner and independent artist John Butler has spoken out in support:

“It is essential that Amrap remains funded by the government so that they can continue to help musicians be heard on community radio. The community radio network in Australia is a vital part of an independent artist's career build. Without community radio 99% of Australia’s artists will not receive any airplay and will lose any ability to connect with their audience. And because of this they will not be able to sustain a career financially. Amrap provides an essential tool for these musicians to access radio play , as it has done for myself in the past years and will hopefully continue to do into the future, with the government's support.”, Butler said.



ARIA Award winner and 2012 ARIA Nominee for Best Blues and Roots Album Mia Dyson considers Amrap as vital to bringing Australian music to the airwaves:

"As an independent artist, the work that Amrap does to bring Australian music to the airwaves is vitally important to me. Amrap has helped me get airplay on community radio stations across Australia, which helps sustain my career. We, as Australian songwriters and musicians, need the government to restore funding so Amrap can keep new Australian music on the air", Dyson said.

ARIA Award Winner Shane Nicholson has also spoken out on the need for continued funding for Amrap:

"We need the government to continue to fund Amrap so community radio doesn't lose access to the Australian music they love and support. Without community radio, many local touring artists couldn't sustain a career. Possibly no country music artist would ever find a radio audience. In many ways, community radio is the lifeblood of the Australian local music scene. It's the steady rock beneath the fragile whimsy of commercial radio. ", Nicholson said.

The ARIA winners join hundreds of stakeholders who have written to the government in support of restoration of funding to Amrap, and a chorus of music industry heavyweights determined to see the government restore funding to Amrap.

Dan Rosen, CEO of ARIA, has highlighted the important role Amrap plays for Australian recording artists:

"ARIA regards Amrap as an extremely successful program that has built capacity in the community radio sector to support Australian recording artists. Losing funding for Amrap will be a major step back for the significant headway Amrap has made to support community radio and Australian recorded music.", Rosen said.

Michael Gudinski (AM), chairman of The Mushroom Group, has supported dozens of Australian artists on their road to the ARIA Awards, and is a passionate advocate for Amrap:

"It will be a serious loss to the Australian music industry if Amrap is unable to continue. Amrap's Airt initiative has helped a myriad of Australian artists forge closer ties with radio stations all over the country and to lose this service would undermine the chances of these local musicians and songwriters developing a vital audience locally and possibly internationally." Gudinski said.

Catherine Haridy manages multiple ARIA winning artists including Eskimo Joe and Bob Evans and chairs Amrap's advisory committee. Haridy regards Amrap as critical to ensuring that new music from both emerging and established artists reaches community radio:

"I volunteer my time to chair Amrap's committee because community radio is a vital building block for the careers of Australian artists. Without Amrap, it will be extremely difficult for the next batch of Australian musicians to reach community radio in a meaningful way, and for great established musicians who do not fit other radio formats to find their rightful place on the airwaves.", Haridy said.



Matt O'Connor, director of the A&R Department, has over 20 years of hit making experience, with his ARIA track record including 17 top 10 records, 12 top 20 records and 16 top 40 records. O'Connor regards Amrap as crucial to Australia's rapidly evolving music landscape.

"Amrap is so valuable for getting airplay for developing Australian artists, and is now a crucial part of the new indie music models evolving in Australia.", O'Connor said.

Brett Cottle, CEO of composers, songwriters and publishers royalty collection society APRA|AMCOS regards Amrap as vital to its members:

"Community radio is integral in the process of developing and encouraging Australian songwriters and composers, and Amrap has played a very important role in finding new opportunities and getting more exposure for new Australian music on the airwaves. APRA|AMCOS has long supported the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, and specifically the work of Amrap, in helping build a sustainable music industry for songwriters and composers in this country.", Cottle said.

Mike Solo, Director of Birds Robe Records, which includes 2012 ARIA Awards nominees Sleep Makes Waves, said his artists and the community radio stations Amrap helps them connect with are all extremely grateful to Amrap:

"The sheer volume of music that goes through AMRAP and the ability to connect with over 300 community radio stations is evidence of its unique success in promoting Australian music. Amrap is a cost-effective program that we consider essential to the continued success of independent music in Australia", Solo said.

Jess Beston, Former A&R Manager for Universal Music Australia and founder and director of Artist consultation agency Tiny Monster has seen the significant connections Amrap has forged between Australian musicians and community radio:

"Amrap is an incredible initiative that changes Australian musicians' lives every single day via providing a once inconceivable but now utterly invaluable bridge between independent artists and community radio across this entire country.", Beston said.

Alongside overwhelming music industry support, hundreds of volunteer community radio broadcasters have written to their local MPs to urge the government to keep Amrap funded so they do not lose the critical community radio service.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND COMMENTS FROM MUSICIANS CONTACT:

Chris Johnson, Amrap Manager 0428 230 017 email manager@amrap.org.au www.amrap.org

Or Kath Letch, CBAA General Manager CBAA 0409 142 301 email kletch@cbaa.org.au