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MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION, HERITAGE AND THE ARTS

**SYDNEY CONVENTION CENTRE
DARLING HARBOUR**

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SONG SUMMIT 2010

Thank you Brett Cottle [CEO, APRA] for the invitation; it's a very real pleasure for me to be here to open the APRA|AMCOS Song Summit 2010, which this year forms part of the VIVID Sydney festival.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of this land, the Cadigal people of the Eora nation, to custodians both past and present.

To distinguished guests, the Hon Timothy Bonga [PNG Government], Feargal Sharkey [CEO of UK Music], Mike Perjanik [APRA Chairman] and a lot of others, welcome.

And I also want to acknowledge my colleagues in Midnight Oil with whom I spent nearly thirty years, writing, crafting, pulling apart and putting back together, recording, editing, mixing, mastering, releasing and then, of course, performing songs.

Now the best songs, the songs that lodge in your head, sound simple enough, but the process of them coming to fruition – from gestation to download – can be complex.

Even if the original creative act by the writer happens in the blink of an eye, and sometimes it does, the fact is the journey from inspiration to fruition, from idea to career, that's much harder.

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton was reported to have a permanent sign on his desk which said, 'It's the economy stupid.'

All label chiefs, managers, would be impresarios, internet music entrepreneurs and A & R people say, "It's the song stupid."

After all, that's what it's about.

And the craft, when well practiced, can pull at the heart strings, and get in the headspace, of millions.

A good song is a powerful thing.

But as I've alluded to above, the song of and by itself, however well it may work, normally, is not enough.

You need someone to sing and play it well, to record it likewise – to market, promote and champion it.

You need the setting, the structure and clear signposts, and for an industry worth \$2 billion a year and in a country still a long way from London, Singapore, New York and Poughkeepsie, some support from the government as well.

But what has the government done and what are we planning?

First, the federal government recognises that music is central to the lives of many Australians, as well as contributing to our rich, diverse and vibrant culture.

Last month I released for targeted consideration and feedback a Discussion Paper outlining a draft Strategic Contemporary Music Industry Plan.

The draft Plan has been developed following extensive consultation with the sector and state governments to identify the short and long term challenges facing the industry.

It outlines our vision for the contemporary music industry which aims to ensure that Australia will have a vibrant, diverse and innovative industry, which is a valued and visible part of Australian culture.

At this stage, I have invited specific industry representatives, including APRA, to make comment on the draft Plan to assist in further refining the suggested ideas for action.

We've highlighted five key priority areas:

- enhancing industry cooperation;
- increasing exposure of Australian music and fostering live music performance;
- boosting music industry exports;
- improving training and skills development; and,
- building business capability and innovation.

In addition to the work we are currently undertaking to finalise the Industry Plan, at the last Budget the Government announced funding over the next three years for *CONTROL: the business of music managers*.

CONTROL addresses a gap identified within the Australian contemporary music industry for business skills development for music managers.

By participating in *CONTROL*, music managers will be provided with an increased knowledge and understanding of the business of music management.

This will in turn equip them to nurture and lead the careers of the Australian music artists which they represent.

A personal priority for me has been the development of our Indigenous culture, recognising its critical role in shaping our culture and understanding our identity as well as generating real economic benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 2008, the Cultural Ministers Council – constituted of all federal, state and territory arts ministers – accepted my proposal for an Indigenous Contemporary Music Action Plan which set out a roadmap to support the Indigenous contemporary music sector to achieve its full potential.

I am delighted that a number of important pilot initiatives have been developed as a result of the Action Plan, including the highly successful *Breakthrough* Program.

Breakthrough provides eligible Indigenous contemporary musicians with grants of up to \$25,000 to produce a high quality recording of a CD that is suitable for broadcast and commercial release and support through skills development training, media and promotion advice, and mentoring support.

The aim is to assist them in maximising the opportunities available to them, particularly leading up to the release of their album.

Looking past our coastline, export growth is critical to the long term sustainability and development of the music industry.

That is why we are focussing on boosting music industry exports through a more consistent approach to international marketing.

Some of you would know the Australian Government currently supports the promotion of Australian music internationally in a number of ways.

For example, Austrade provides financial assistance through reimbursement of export promotion costs to music businesses through the Export Markets Development Grants Scheme.

The Australia Council also administers a range of programs which support international opportunities for Australian artists. These include:

- *International Pathways*, which provides Australian musicians with the opportunity to build their reputation overseas through support of international touring to three or more cities;
- *Track Record*, which provides support for music managers to promote and sell Australian music acts internationally; and
- *Live on Stage*, which supports international showcasing activities and major performances at key festivals; as well as targeted promotional activities at key international music markets.

As part of the Market Development International Music Strategy 2008-11, the Australia Council also provided funding towards a Music Export Producer position, co-funded with APRA.

The position is based at APRA, co-hosts of this event, and is responsible for coordinating activities under the *Sounds Australia* banner.

Sounds Australia aims to raise the profile and visibility of the Australian contemporary music sector within key international music markets including South by South West (US) and The Great Escape (UK), through coordinating a program of activities including showcase events, promotional materials, networking events, official trade stands and peripheral support services.

It's a really good initiative.

Recognising that live music performance has long played a significant role in Australian cultural life, particularly for young musicians and Indigenous musicians, the Australian Government has committed to work with states, territories and local governments to reduce barriers to live music performance and encourage the growth of live music precincts in cities throughout Australia.

Most recently, the Cultural Ministers Council released a publication titled '*Supporting Australia's Live Music Industry: Suggested principles for best practice*'.

This document looks at issues to do with live performance which are affected by regulation and puts the spotlight on a number of best practice principles which could be considered by government agencies in their own regulatory environments.

The Government has also committed to ensuring that Australian music acts have opportunities to gain valuable performing experience and exposure when international acts tour the country.

During the 2007 election, a commitment was made to amend the migration regulations to ensure that incoming music acts employ at least one local support act as a condition of their temporary entertainment visas.

The proposed Certification Scheme would require certain incoming foreign musicians to engage at least one local band or musician as a support act for each of their performances in Australia.

The establishment of the Scheme will require an amendment to the current *Migration Regulations 1994*.

Feedback received during the consultation process is being used to refine the Scheme and I expect to finalise its parameters shortly.

We are well aware that, while live performance plays a critical role in building a profile and career, copyright remains king.

In particular, the Government recognises how important it is to ensure that the copyright of song writers, performing artists and others who invest their talent and resources in the music industry is adequately protected in the digital age.

Along with other key departments, we will continue to examine ways to adequately protect artists' copyright given the challenges posed by new and emerging platforms and changes in consumer patterns.

The Australian Government encourages any discussions between representatives of copyright owners and Internet Service Providers that are aimed at considering potential solutions to address issues arising from the popularity of peer-to-peer file sharing and reduce digital copyright infringement.

APRA's message of Music + Rights = Respect encapsulates the importance of both the recognition and protection of rights.

Now more than ever, with an emerging digital music economy, it's vital that music creators are aware of their rights and that music consumers respect those rights.

Intellectual property is central to an innovative society.

I began these remarks noting the journey a successful song will need to take and in the global world where the possibility and hope that your music might be picked up by someone in a far away place is one I share with all of the songwriters and performers here at this summit.

And look what can happen; here we have *Sydney Meets Sydney* - a cross cultural collaboration between Sydney, NSW, Australia and Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Sounds Australia and the East Coast Music Festival Canada joined forces earlier this year to provide co-writing opportunities for two Australian acts (Fergus Brown and *Dead Letter Chorus*) with two Canadian acts (Carmen Townsend and *Two Hour Traffic*).

Created as a device to grow export capacity and build cultural collaborations between Canadian and Australia artists, the *Sydney Meets Sydney* partnership exceeded the expectations of all involved.

Not only were two fantastic original songs written by the talented participating artists but the relationships that were established amongst the peripheral networks of management and labels will go a long way towards potential success in the respective markets.

So it's now my great pleasure to officially open Song Summit 2010 by showcasing the results of this cross-cultural collaboration and to welcome on stage Gabby Huber from *Dead Letter Chorus* and Liam Corcoran and Alec O'Hanley from *Two Hours Traffic* to perform their song *Last Day In Your Town*.

So let the songs loose so the music flows across borders and may our song-makers reach into all the corners of our world.