



# MUSIC VICTORIA

## STRATEGIC PLAN

JULY 2022 – JUNE 2026



## > ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

This Strategic Plan has been developed on the land of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin nation.

We acknowledge the Boon Wurrung People, the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Eastern Maar People, the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee, being Latji Latji and Ngintait Traditional Owners, the Gunaikurnai People, the Gunditjmara People, the Taungurung People, the Wadawurrung People, the Yorta Yorta People, the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Nations and the Wurundjeri People as the Traditional Owners of Victoria.

We acknowledge them as the first artists, the first musicians, the first storytellers, the first communities and the first creators of culture. We deeply respect the role that music and songlines play in the continuation of their culture for the past 60,000+ years.

We also pay our respects to all of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and communities that we work alongside and in solidarity with. Thank you to the First Nations artists, musicians and community members who have contributed to this project.

We acknowledge sovereignty has never been ceded.

*Always was, always will be, sacred Aboriginal land.*



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## > DEFINITIONS

**MUSIC** may be written, recorded and/or performed and includes all genres and styles imaginable.

What is commonly referred to as **VICTORIA**, for us represents the land of the Boon Wurrung People, the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Eastern Maar People, the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee, being Latji Latji and Ngintait Traditional Owners, the Gunaikurnai People, the Gunditjmara People, the Taungurung People, the Wurundjeri People, the Wadawurrung People, the Yorta Yorta People, and the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Nations (the Traditional Owners of Victoria).


What is now known as **AUSTRALIA** for us represents the island of more than 500 nations that was invaded by British colonials in 1788 resulting in Aboriginal people becoming victims and survivors of at least 311 frontier massacres.

The **ECOLOGY / SCENE** includes musicians, music professionals and businesses - e.g. singers, song writers, composers, session musicians, DJs, music artists, management agencies, labels, publishers, booking agencies, promoters, sound engineers, producers, lighting technicians, publicists, music media, accountants, road crews, venues, recording and rehearsal studios.

Our work is primarily focused on the above roles as professional pursuits, which results in economic activity. Where useful, we have used the term **INDUSTRY** to define this focus.

The deep importance of music as a respected cultural practice and as a community building activity is not underestimated, and as such we work in close collaboration with:

- **Songlines Aboriginal Music Corporation** in support of First Nations musicians and music workers;
- **Wild At Heart, Tibi Access, Get Skilled Access, Bandmates** and **Arts Access Victoria** in support of disabled musicians and workers;
- **Black Music Alliance Australia** in support of African diaspora musicians and workers;
- **Multicultural Arts Victoria, The Boite** and **Casa Cultura** in support of migrant musicians and music workers;
- **The Push** in support of young people in the industry and music's perception as a valued career choice; and
- in partnership with **Community Music Victoria** in support of music-making among all Victorian communities.



We use the term music **COMMUNITY** to acknowledge the significant overlap between the industry, music consumers (listeners, fans and audiences) and grassroots musicians.

An industry **PEAK BODY** is a non-government service organisation whose membership consists of those with allied interests. They have an outward-looking (social reform) role - including policy development, advocacy to government and the wider community, consultation, research, and an inward-looking (industry development) role - including member support, information dissemination, infrastructure development and networking.

**JUSTICE CENTRED DESIGN** is a decolonial methodology for creating more equitable, safer and accessible creative organisations, which Music Victoria is currently co-creating with Creatives of Colour, a research and design driven organisation that exists to uplift First Nations, Black and People of Colour creatives.

When we use the term **PROGRESSIVE** in our vision, we mean a music sector that is forward thinking - 100 years ahead of where we find ourselves, one that is no longer bound to capitalist markers of success, and one that has addressed the ableist, colonial, racially biased, classist, ageist, sexist cultures and structures in which we are currently operating.

We use **EQUITABLE** to mean that power, resources and opportunities are evenly distributed.



We are not limited by genre, profession, or location across the state. Groups that are underestimated and therefore underrepresented in our industry have been expressly invited to engage with us to achieve our mission and address the gaps.

## > EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Music Victoria (Contemporary Music Victoria Inc.) exists to service our members. We are an independent, not-for-profit, industry peak body, operating with the oversight of a Board. Founded in 2009 and emerging in response to liquor licensing laws and an identified gap, we take on the role of conduit between the industry, its participants and government. Our unique birds eye view of the industry gives us the ability to see, hear, distil and address the most pressing challenges.

There are similar organisations in each of the State and Territories of so-called Australia, with whom we collaborate, under the banner of Australian Music Industry Network (AMIN). As a peer network we share knowledge, resources and experience to address issues of national significance.

While up until recently, the music sector was largely self-sustaining in the free market, the resources and rewards have never been evenly distributed. These underlying inequities (the result of colonial, capitalist, ableist, racist, classist, sexist and ageist cultures and structures) have only been exacerbated due to the pandemic and are now exposed to a point where they can no longer be ignored.

This strategic plan has been developed following a period of eighteen months marked by isolation, disconnection, grief and emptiness. But this strange time has also marked yet another chapter in the story of music's power and wonder — the unstoppable creative vitality of the people who make it, and the deep commitment of those who make it happen.



In this plan we have re-centered our creators, and while the approaches employed by peak bodies are generally quite standard, it is the way in which we intend to do this work that marks a significant change for the organisation.

We have a new CEO, a team that has quickly grown in size, diversity, location, and an appetite for change. We expect to make mistakes along the way but are committed to continue on, to learn and reflect along the way. This plan is ambitious, but it is also exactly what we need to be doing.

In this strategic plan we are acknowledging that we don't always need to be the experts. Instead, we are a conduit and connector, an organisation who partners, collaborates, and enables others - distributing our access to resources, information and power for the overall success and future of music in our state. We'll use our voice and invite you to add yours.

There are multiple crises facing us as we write, we simply want to make a difference in our spheres of influence.



Simone Schinkel  
CEO



Sally Howland  
Chair

## > 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

### OUR MISSION

To enable the full social, economic, and cultural potential of music to be realised, for the benefit of all Victorians.

### OUR VISION

A valued, progressive, and equitable state music scene.

### OUR VALUES

We at Music Victoria are:

- Only as strong as our community
- Compelled to serve
- Practising continual improvement
- Committed to sustainable development (as per the United Nations' 2030 goals)
- Accountable for our actions.



## THE ISSUE

Participants in the Victorian music ecosystem are vulnerable - some much more than others.

Our people, businesses and community are struggling to withstand the adverse impacts of multiple stressors to which they are exposed.



## OUR AIM

By 2026, Victoria is recognised as a place of best practice and leadership with regards to the valuing of the music ecology and its participants.

## OUR EXTERNAL APPROACHES

In order to address The Issue identified above, we will embark on the following four key streams of externally focused activity across the period of this 2022 - 2026 Strategic Plan.

### a. Advocacy:

We will drive a united agenda to achieve positive policy and regulatory outcomes for a diverse membership.

### b. Industry Development:

We will build capacity at all career stages through evidence-based programs.

### c. Conduit and Connector:

We will be the most trusted source of information for the Victorian music sector.

### d. Promote the Value:

We will ensure that the holistic value of music is widely understood and appreciated, resulting in greater sustainability of music industry careers.

## OUR INTERNAL APPROACHES

The next two streams are internally focused and enable our organisation to deliver on the above.

### e. Financial Security:

Our financial operations will be underpinned by multi-year support, from diverse income streams, allowing us to provide our services with generosity.

### f. People and Teams:

They will live and breathe the organisation's values, equipped with the expertise and drive to deliver, reflecting who we represent, valuing excellence and wellbeing equally.

## > CONTEXT

We have always celebrated music's positive force, but this strategic plan calls us to put those words into action in unprecedented ways.

In 2020 ARIA reported another year of growth in recorded music revenue (the sixth consecutive year of growth), which reflects the important role that recorded music played for Australians going through numerous lockdowns.

According to LPA's 2018 Ticketing Attendance and Revenue report, Victoria was the largest state for live music. Melbourne in particular has the largest number of live music venues of any city in the world.

Our live music venues and local governments are supported by the State with a good regulatory context, in terms of planning, liquor, and environmental protections, but obviously challenged by the lasting impacts of health restrictions due to COVID-19.

While currently limited, the export value of the Australia music industry was estimated to be approximately \$195 million in 2019. This includes the combined export income of Australian artists, music publishers and record labels many of whom call Victoria home.

**Technology is the ultimate disrupter** for the music industry, but history has taught us to follow the audience.

Early adoption and upskilling is essential to maximising opportunities, and may work in our favour in recentering and valuing the artist.

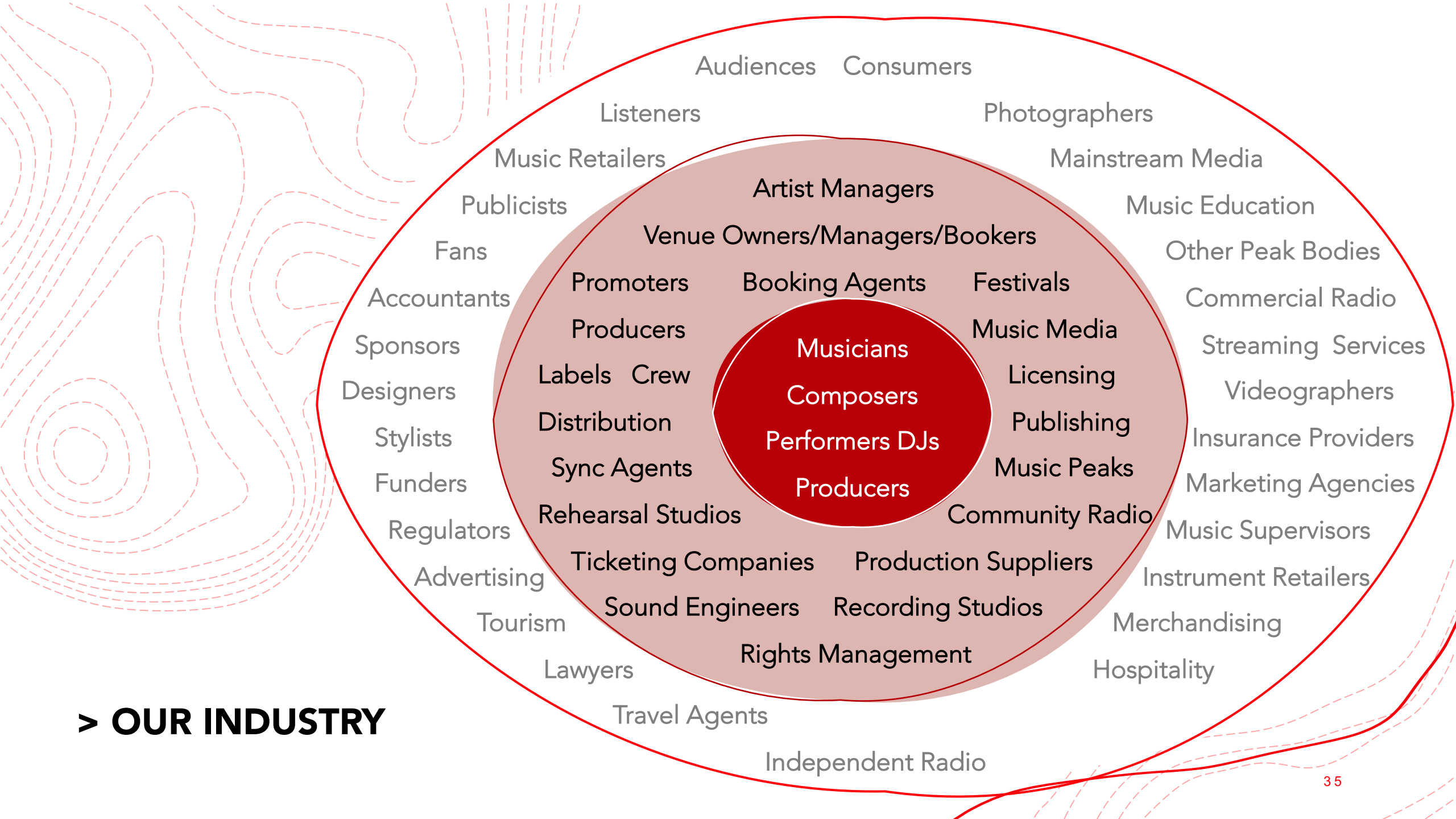
In terms of pathways, research into the Victorian Music Business Career Life Cycle by the Victorian Music Development Office (VMDO) suggests that the barriers to entry are low as no formal qualifications are required, however the **industry lacks formal structures** for progression, and much experience is gained through a network of friends. Ultimately this perpetuates the same few being given opportunities and works against ambitions to embrace and reflect the diversity of our world.

However the biggest challenge is that musical artists' incomes haven't increased in 30 years, resulting in a strain on finances, standard of living, and mental health. Of the 495 musicians who responded to our pre-covid survey:

- 69% reported that their earnings from music do not cover the cost of their artistic practice;
- 70% supplement their income with employment outside the music industry;
- 51% of musicians earn below \$20,000 annual income from their work within the industry;
- 37% of musicians earned less than \$20,000 outside of the entertainment industry;
- Approximately 65% of musicians have a combined income under the average weekly wage.

Many Victorian **artists' livelihoods are in crisis.**





**> OUR INDUSTRY**



## > CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The development of this strategic plan has been guided by the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals which aim to address the global challenges we face by 2030. Our work does not happen in a vacuum, and by relying on this bigger picture thinking, we are able to make a worthwhile contribution in our spheres of influence.

The eight UN Goals that we believe we can have the greatest impact on (based on our business, network, and areas of expertise) are:

- Reduced Inequalities
- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- Quality Education
- Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Responsible Consumption and Production
- Gender Equity
- Good Health and Wellbeing

## > MUSIC INDUSTRY CHALLENGES AND OUR INITIATIVES

Emerging out of the overarching UN goals, we have identified eight interrelated challenges for the music industry. No one person or organisation can solve these monumental challenges, but we all have a part to play. For some we have initiated specific programs or activities, but they all underscore our work at Music Victoria.

### CHALLENGE #1

Specific harms of colonisation on First Nations communities practising music.

### METHODS

Prioritising and resourcing First Nations led collaborations, when invited.

### INITIATIVES

- Ongoing collaboration with Songlines including the establishment of a First Nations Booking Agency.
- Project specific engagement with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music Office (NATSIMO), National Indigenous Music Awards (NIMAs), BlakSound at Bigsound, Bad Apples, and other opportunities as identified.

## CHALLENGE #2

Specific harms of colonisation on Black, Brown and other racialized groups in the music sector.

## METHODS

Listening to, enabling, resourcing and expanding the networks of self-determined initiatives led by impacted communities.

## INITIATIVES

- Resourcing Black Music Alliance Australia in their work towards self-governed representation and cultural equity for Black musicians.
- Resourcing quarterly peer-to-peer support groups led by impacted communities, and meetings with gatekeepers / stakeholders.
- Using Justice Centred Design principles and processes to identify and build appropriate programs including top down and bottom-up approaches.

## CHALLENGE #3

An assumption of capitalist frameworks which leads to the exploitation of people in the music sector:

- Musicians in Australia are paid on average only \$7.50 per hour, well below the minimum wage (MEAA).
- 1 in 4 gigs are unpaid and contracts are regularly broken without consequences (Musicians Australia).
- The twin income pillars of live and recorded music have both been eroded in recent years.

## METHODS

Founded on economic justice: the opportunity to establish a sufficient material foundation upon which to have a dignified, productive, and creative life.

## INITIATIVES

- Navigating assistance programs, negotiating re-opening, supporting implementation of regulations, advocating for the needs of our members.
- Upskilling across all career stages, increasing agency.
- Researching, piloting and promoting alternative income streams and industry models.

## CHALLENGE #4

The global pandemic and its ongoing impacts that have decimated our live music scene. In September 2021 we were still only trading at 9% of pre-covid activity nationally (APRA).

Specifically the domestic and international border closures making it very challenging for artists to tour, and the impacts of social distancing requiring limited capacities.

## METHODS

Balancing the health impacts with the economic impacts.

Supporting live music to happen and play a key role in recovery and community building after periods of extended isolation resulting in collective trauma.

Building back better.

## INITIATIVES

- Research into the use of rapid testing, permitted travel for artists and workers, context specific health restrictions, alternative risk mitigation strategies, and insurance options.
- Pitching for their implementation and providing upskilling support.
- Advocating for maintaining local content post-covid.

## CHALLENGE #5

Disproportionately effected and disadvantaged regional music communities due to limited access to internet, resources and opportunities, the impacts of bushfires, droughts and floods.

An under-utilised, under-developed, disconnected regional music network currently recovering from both bushfires and covid impacts.

## METHODS

Long term commitments to locally designed and led regional programs.

## INITIATIVES

- Ongoing collaborations with Regional Arts Victoria and The Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres.
- Project specific support from Visit Victoria.

## CHALLENGE #6

The climate crisis exacerbating the vulnerability of participants in the Victorian music ecosystem.

## METHODS

Integrating the role that music can play in recovery, building communities' resilience and coordinating the upskilling required to survive on-going climate disasters.

## INITIATIVES

- Ongoing collaborations with Green Music Australia in upskilling the industry and setting benchmarks.
- Supporting the establishment of The Environmental Music Prize.
- Community Music Victoria 'Singing From County' composition project.

## CHALLENGE #7

Specific harms of our ageist and patriarchal society on women-identifying / gender diverse people's participation in music, including the fact that:

- 65% have experienced pressure to have sex.
- 85% have experienced other forms of sexual harassment (Crabtree 2021).

## METHODS

Founded on musical talent (not age or gender) and believing survivors. Survivor-centric approach. Trauma-informed approach.

Driven by accountability for the structures and people who are perpetrating harm.

## INITIATIVES

- Stewardship of CoHealth's Access All Areas program addressing prevalence of gender inequality, and sexual harassment in the industry.
- Delivering research, setting benchmarks, establishing quotas, and raising public awareness.



## CHALLENGE #8

Specific harms of our ableist society on Deaf and/or Disabled people's participation in music - 97% have reported experiencing barriers (Arts Access Victoria).

*"I have an easier time disclosing my queerness than my disabilities."*

## METHODS

Assumes a social model of disability.

In working towards a Universally accessible model of working, we learn from and with Deaf and/or Disabled led organisations, collectives and initiatives.

## INITIATIVES

- Setting targets for improvement and only working with those who share our values.
- Leading by example, Award for a Disabled musician, Accessible Venues national charter.
- Implementation of the recommendations from Arts Access Victoria's 2021 Music Makers Research.

## > SUCCESS MEASURES

### a. Advocacy

#### PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- i. Membership
- ii. Research
- iii. National Advocacy
- iv. Victorian Advocacy
- v. Local Government Advocacy

#### SUCCESS MEASURES

- Membership has grown to 10,000 and reflects the full diversity of the Victorian community.
- Policy positions stated by Music Victoria have been adopted, we are a trusted source.
- We are part of relevant national conversations.
- Clear alignment of music interests between all levels of government.
- Stakeholder feedback is positive.

#### OUTCOMES

To have galvanised a broad and diverse membership which has changed the operating environment to centre the musician and be conducive to the best outcomes for music in the state.

## b. Industry Development

### PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- i. Industry Consultations
- ii. Industry Collaborations
- iii. Access to Experts
- iv. Targeted Projects \*
- v. Regional Programs

### SUCCESS MEASURES

- Priorities are known and endorsed by members.
- Collaborations are mutually- beneficial, maximising efficiencies and community expertise, and last beyond one project.
- Participants gain new knowledge, networks and positions of power.
- Full take-up of programs.
- Program outcomes have been achieved as per stand alone plans and targets.

### OUTCOMES

To have identified current and emerging skills gaps and inequities, leading to the development and delivery of co-designed programs (that reduce barriers for those most impacted) in support of sustainable careers in music.

## iv. Targeted Projects \*

\* Music Victoria is often engaged as a delivery partner for key Victorian Government projects. Most recently this includes:



VMDO can be best explained as the research and development arm of the industry. It is focused on the future, on innovation, emerging markets and the technological advancements that will impact on our industry's future success. It takes inspiration from international trends, running pilot programs, which if successful, may then be adopted by Music Victoria. It backs our Victorian Music Businesses to take calculated risks and ultimately prosper.

MUSIC MARKET is a purpose built event and co-working space located at Collingwood Yards alongside VMDO, Music Victoria, Community Music Victoria, Songlines, The Push and many other music businesses. It aims to become the heart and soul of Victorian Music. To be launched in 2022.

## c. Conduit and Connector

### PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- i. Communications
- ii. Marketing
- iii. Networking Events
- iv. Shared Successes
- v. Community Music  
Victoria Partnership

### SUCCESS MEASURES

- Engagement - open rates, click through rates, feedback, website traffic, awareness.
- Number of new connections made, and longer-term outcomes as a result.
- Broad understanding of industry challenges and strategies to address them.
- Recognition of the work of many collaborators to achieve cultural change.
- Number of linkages made with Community Music Victoria participants.

### OUTCOMES

The Victorian music industry has the necessary intel, resources, information, and contacts to have the conversations that the industry needs to have around cultural equity, safety, opportunities, covid recovery, and sustainability.

## d. Promote the Value

### PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- i. Showcase Opportunities
- ii. Music Victoria Awards
- iii. Music Lover Program
- iv. Community Music Victoria Partnership
- v. Media and Publicity

### SUCCESS MEASURES

- Reach, engagement and scope of topics and music covered and showcased.
- Number of musicians provided with paid opportunities.
- Event attendance and flow on outcomes and opportunities.
- Music Lover subscribers reach 5000.
- Promotion of the full benefits of music to larger audiences.

### OUTCOMES

To have more Victorians recognising, celebrating and rewarding the Victorian music community - including sectors of the Victorian music community who have previously fallen by the wayside.

## e. Financial Security

### PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- i. Government
- ii. Private Support
- iii. Earned Income
- iv. Transparency

### SUCCESS MEASURES

- Multi-year support secured from the Victorian government.
- Multi-year sponsorships secured which covers the full cost of the Awards including wages.
- Significant increase in donations.
- Philanthropic grants secured.
- Memberships are valued and worth paying for - reaching \$140k by 2026.
- Build reserves to 20% of total turnover.

### OUTCOMES

Robust financial systems, ongoing financial support from diversified income streams, and ample reserves for a rainy day.

## f. People and Teams

### PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- i. Justice Centred Design
- ii. Equity Action Plan
- iii. Staff Development
- iv. Board Development

### SUCCESS MEASURES

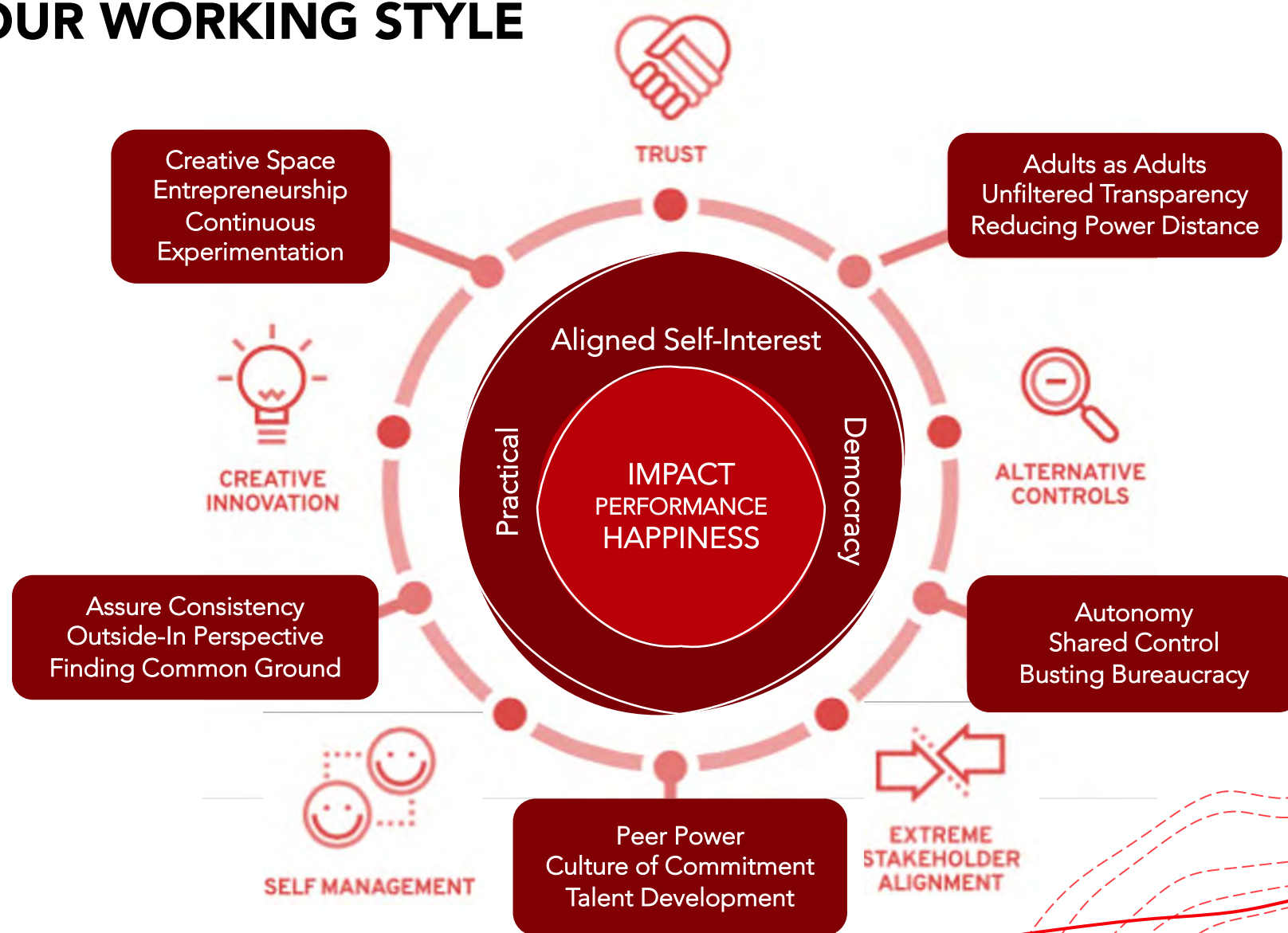
- Staff report satisfaction, belonging, growth and safety.
- Longevity of employment and increasing tenure.
- Short-term staff have an on-going relationship with the organisation.
- Board Rules of Association are fit for purpose.
- Our Board reflects the diversity of the Victorian music sector.

### OUTCOMES

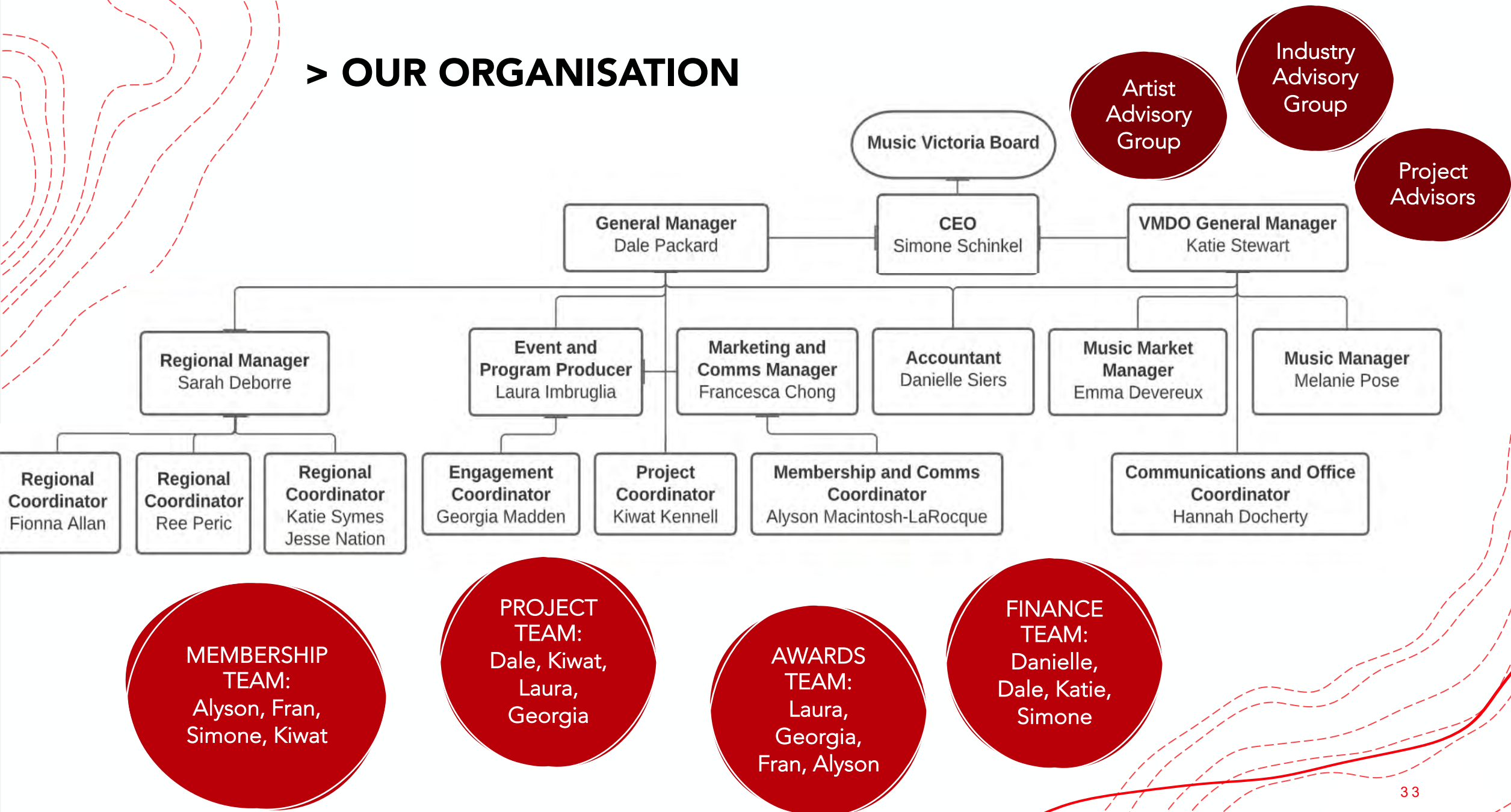
Our staff and board are engaged, empowered to make decisions and act with autonomy, while also being generously supported and valued as whole humans (not just a resource).

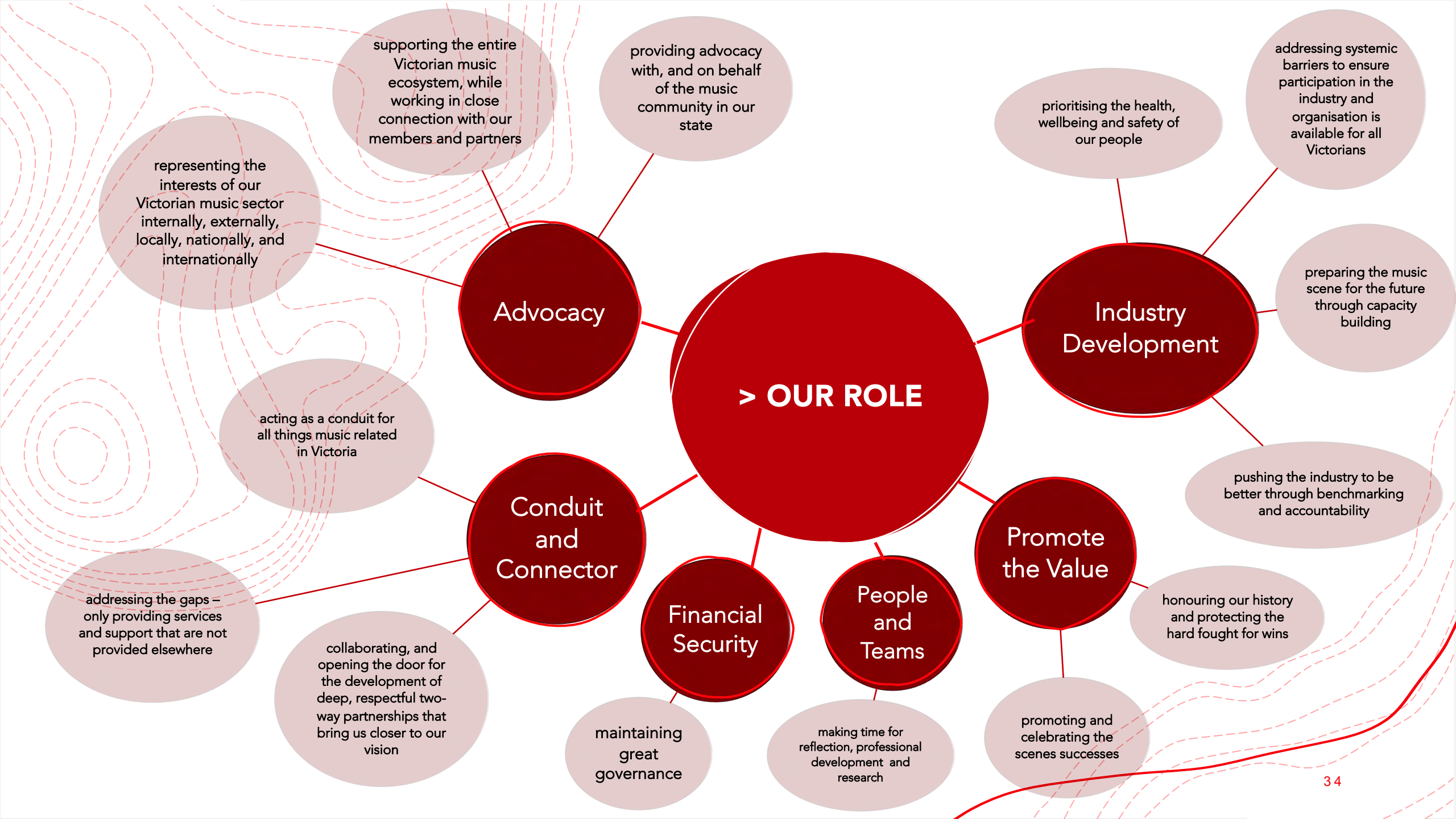


## > OUR WORKING STYLE



## > OUR ORGANISATION





## > OUR SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

17.5 million  
live music  
attendees in  
Greater Melbourne  
(Live Music Census  
2017).

1 million  
attendees  
at regional  
music  
festivals.

2.89 million  
Victorians that  
attend live music  
activities in  
regional Victoria  
each year (not  
including  
festivals).

11,000+  
Music  
Victoria  
subscribers.

100+ Victorian  
record labels,  
including Australian  
Independent  
Record Labels  
Association and  
ARIA members.

200+ Victorian  
artist managers,  
including  
Association of  
Artist Managers  
members.

55  
community  
radio  
stations.

20,000+  
subscribers to  
community radio  
(including RRR  
102.7FM and PBS  
106.7FM).

19,000+  
songwriter  
members of  
APRA AMCOS  
who live in  
Victoria.

2,000+  
Music  
Victoria  
members.

59 bricks and  
mortar  
records stores  
across  
Victoria.

700+ venues  
across the  
state regularly  
presenting live  
music.

17,000+  
music  
industry  
professionals  
(15,000 FTE).