

# APRA: Australasian music is our business

Since 2002, there's been an 800% increase in the number of Australian and New Zealand acts that have performed at SxSW - the world's largest and most prestigious music event.

## Australasian artists set sights high

This year's Australasian performers include acts that have more than passed the test within their own market. Having established a presence for themselves down under, their sights are now set on the world - a world that is increasingly developing a taste for things Australasian.

As was evident at the recent MIDEM in Cannes: optimism about the international outlook for Australasian music has reached a new high in recent times. Driven by quality music, impassioned decision makers, and a young and energetic new guard of music industry professionals, the industry is looking to maximise export opportunities in both emerging and traditional markets.

The Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA) is a proud supporter of this growth and celebrates the increasing domestic and international success of its members.

## APRA: who we are, what we do

APRA is a non-profit association that administers the rights of the world's composers, songwriters and publishers in Australia and New Zealand. Established in 1926, the association now represents over 36,000 Australasian writers and publishers through direct membership and over two million writers and publishers throughout the world under reciprocal, bilateral agreements with similar overseas service organisations members.

APRA collects and distributes royalties to composers, songwriters and music publishers. APRA members can also draw on the support and services of a professional team who know the industry, and can provide expert advice on the issues that affect songwriters and their careers. They can participate in a range of member activities including seminars, our prestigious awards and industry showcase events.

APRA's sponsorship and support for the Australasian contingent at SxSW is just one indication of the kind of active support it throws behind its membership. This year, APRA was represented at MIDEM for the first time - an indication of the growing profile that Australasian composers and songwriters are enjoying internationally.

## APRA actively supports songwriter development

In addition, APRA actively promotes the international success of its members by offering programs such as the Professional Development Awards which offer scholarships and co-writing opportunities to promising emerging songwriters across genres. Past winners have gone on to build international profiles for themselves. Vassy, for example, a 2004 PDA winner in the Contemporary Music Category has recently signed management deals with New York based Alan Wolmark from CEC Management New York (manages Ben Fold) and Joe Berman for Sumo Music in LA. Her single Wanna Fly, has made it into film (Queen Latifah's Last Holiday, TV Grey's Anatomy, and advertising (Hilton Hotels, Pepsi's Diet Sprite).



Going Global - Vassy

Our awards programs recognise the achievements of Australasian composers and songwriters in film, contemporary classical music and pop music. Several of the Australasian acts scheduled to perform at SxSW this year, for example, have won APRA awards for their work (Decoder Ring, APRA/AGSC Feature Film Score of the Year 2005 for Somersault; Missy Higgins, APRA Song of the Year 2005 for Scar).

## Securing payment for use of Australasian music

While promoting the use of Australasian music is a key part of APRA's brief, the other part is securing payment for that use. As Petriella explains, "Our role is to bring together music creators and music users, to offer a simple and easy way for music users to get the permission, or licence, they need to be able to use copyright music in their businesses or at their events. Without that licence, a music user may be infringing copyright laws. APRA provides a one-stop-shop solution for music users through its licence schemes.

"We licence radio and television stations for their broadcast use of music. We also licence concert promoters, cinemas and venues that provide any form of live or recorded music. At the moment, APRA has more than 60,000 licence agreements in place. We also do a lot to ensure that these agreements are commercial arrangements that benefit our members.

"Over the last year, for example, we've successfully renegotiated several major background music licence agreements with the Australian retail, hospitality and fitness industries. Once implemented the new agreements will deliver a 100% increase in licence fees for our members.

"In this way, we do collectively what would otherwise be difficult for writers or music users to do on an individual basis."

The licence fees APRA collects are distributed to writers and their publishers around the world, based on survey data provided by licensees.

For the 2004 - 2005 financial year, for the first time, net distributable revenue surpassed \$100m (up 10% to \$107 million). Foreign royalty receipts

for APRA members grew by 10% to \$17 million. In addition, APRA's expense to revenue ratio fell below 13% - one of the lowest expense ratios of any collecting society worldwide.

"That means APRA members and affiliated societies get more than 87 cents out of every licensing dollar collected by APRA in Australia and New Zealand," says Petriella. "Few collecting societies around the world can match that achievement".

More on [www.apra.com.au](http://www.apra.com.au)



Decoder Ring at the APRA Screen Music Awards, 2005



APRA Chief Executive: Brett Cottle



APRA Deputy director, member services: Milly Petriella