

***“We’ll know we have gender equity when we don’t need to have these gendered consultations or programs in the first place”***

### **Why the need for an NT Women in Music Plan?**

In response to the lack of opportunities for First Nation women in music, MusicNT has been providing a suite of music development programs for Indigenous women and girls over the past decade. Programs include Divas for emerging singer songwriters and Sista Sounds as a general introduction to making music and writing songs. Divas has been offered in Alice Springs, Darwin and Tennant Creek and Sista Sounds has provided workshops in Alice Springs and over 30 remote communities, mainly in the central region of Australia. For more information about our Indigenous Women’s Music Program (IWMP), contact [jessie@musicnt.com.au](mailto:jessie@musicnt.com.au) or ring our Alice Springs office on (08) 8952 0322.

Additionally, in 2018 MusicNT ran a one day conference in Darwin for women in music featuring the documentary ***“Her Song, Her Story”***, several workshops and opportunities to network. We also provide artist support to female identifying artists and regularly hear from women across industry. As the national spotlight has shone more brightly on diversity and gender equity across industry, MusicNT is keen that female identifying and non-binary artists have equitable opportunities as NT artists and musicians.

In 2020 MusicNT presented **Territory Sounds**, the first ever countdown of the Top 40 NT songs of all time, as a celebration of Territory Day and as voted by the NT population. Popular voting resulted in only 3 females - or 4 of 40 songs, all by Indigenous women - being represented. This provided the catalyst to consult broadly with industry about the current situation, including collecting information on successful programs or activities.

### **The National picture**

TripleJs ***“The Hack”*** has been reporting on gender equity across the Australian Music Industry since 2016. In 5 years of reporting, enrolments in music have remained stable with almost an even split between females and males enrolled. ***“What’s clear is that interest in music isn’t gendered. The makeup of the industry after this early stage, however, skews towards men.”*** Their report for 2019 found that ***“women are still underrepresented in the industry at almost every level – including on festival lineups, on the boards of peak music bodies, on radio and at record labels.”*** There were some improvements including greater parity in earnings by female and male songwriters, greater diversity in award nominations and more women managing independent record labels.

In 2018, Vicki Gordon established the Inaugural **Australian Women in Music Awards** to showcase the work of Australian women working across the industry. The Awards not only reflect female and non-binary artist’s achievements but also include broader industry categories which many Awards do not acknowledge. As Greta Brereton writes in ***The Beat***

***“...it’s difficult to really challenge gender inequality while we’re still having to break into two separate categories for women to get the recognition they deserve.***

***Having an all-female awards ceremony like the AWMA is a great thing, but what we need to change is the lack of women who take out awards once they’re head to head with their male counterparts. It’s the same story with representation on the radio, or on festival lineups, or in business roles, where women fight tooth and nail for a seat at the table of major record labels.***

***We all know that it doesn’t come down to a lack of qualified women or talented musicians – it comes down to culture and attitudes.***

***The ugly truth of it is that, because the perspectives and behaviours that drive inequality are so deeply ingrained, these are really hard changes to make. The gender disparity we see in music is the same imbalance we see in society at large, and erasing it is a painfully slow process.”***

Researchers like Rae Cooper, Professor of Gender, Work and Employment Relations at Uni of Sydney & co-author of the **2017 *Skipping A Beat: Assessing the state of gender equality in the Australian music industry*** research report, considers that a range of practical solutions, enacted simultaneously are required ***“otherwise we’re going to be sitting around having a conversation like this with someone who’s my great granddaughter.”***

Practical strategies include anything from more government funding to female artists, more strategies to stamp out sexual harassment and assaults at gigs and festivals, a push for more women to be on public boards, quotas, and broadscale efforts to reshape attitudes and beliefs.

Opinions remain divided nationally about introducing quotas with some believing that they lead to unhelpful attitudes such as “she only got the gig because they needed a woman” or that talent and merit are cast aside in the quest to meet targets. Others believe that quotas promote equality by forcing people to consider diversity and to actively change their thinking.

#### **Further reading:**

<https://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/by-the-numbers-2020-representation-of-women-in-australian-music/12033388>

<https://www.beat.com.au/gender-equality-in-the-music-industry-where-do-we-stand-and-what-needs-to-change/>

<https://womeninmusicawards.com.au/statistics-and-research/>

#### **How we developed this plan**

This plan reflects MusicNTs pre-existing knowledge base combined with the views of 34 participants in group sessions held in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin in September, 21 respondents to an online survey and input from 7 participants who were unable to make it to group sessions. Of these 62 participants, 9 were male and 7 were Indigenous. Group sessions included the option for women to meet separately in Alice Springs and Darwin.

Group sessions were facilitated by MusicNTs Central Australian Manager (Liz Archer) and supported by our Indigenous Music Development Officer (Jessie Grainer), both female. After presenting background information including the national research cited above, participants were asked a series of open ended questions including:

- what it's like for women in music in each community/region,
- any evidence of a gender gap,
- whether some groups were more marginalised than others,
- successful programs or other supports for women in music they were aware of, and,
- the role MusicNT should play to support opportunities for women across industry.

During the second half of each session, individuals were invited to write goals and strategies for NT women in music onto separate pieces of paper which were then mapped on the floor. Similar ideas were grouped together. Participants from each group session were provided with a copy of the notes taken and the visual plan developed by their group several weeks later and invited to make further comment. These were then combined with input from the online survey and individual responses and with MusicNT's existing knowledge.

## Summary of findings

There was overwhelming support from participants for holding these consultations and getting the conversations started, especially in MusicNTs capacity as peak body for the NT music industry. There is a need to continue and deepen discussions around more contentious issues such as introducing quotas compared with making mainstream music scene more accessible, and extending these discussions and strategies to include other marginalised gender identities and groups such as First Nations, POC, LGBTQI++, those with disabilities and older or younger musicians.

Whilst pathways through the music industry and many of the issues faced along the way might be similar for all musicians or industry workers, there is compelling evidence that women in the NT are more adversely affected by these than men. Indeed, the lack of representation of women across industry was the most commented on topic running through all consultations. The biggest disadvantage many women saw in participating in the music industry was being a Mum. Other factors contributing to under-representation were:

- exclusion from open mic and jam sessions & not being offered work as session musicians or as headline acts
- live gig culture often revolving around alcohol and late nights which is not family friendly and makes it difficult for Mums to attend, especially if they are primary carers and/or working
- funding bodies and sponsors viewing additional demands for women as being a barrier rather than factoring in extra funding for costs such as childcare, freight costs for prams/cots, etc.
- Lack of respect for women, especially those in broader industry roles such as sound engineers, other technicians, management, artistic direction, etc.
- Of 10 areas, “being treated professionally at gigs or when recording” and “feeling safe at a gig” were seen by the most survey respondents as being harder for women than men (see appendix XX)

Women who participated in group sessions were disappointed that more men did not come along (5 of the 6 males who did were in one group & 4 of these were asked to attend as part of their paid work role). They are keen to know whether males see gender diversity as relevant or important, or whether they were reluctant to step forward and be seen as “taking over” or “speaking for” women. It's recommended that future general conferences or similar events presented by MusicNT include panel discussions around gender equity that include male panelists.

One of the outstanding strengths for NT women in music is the ability and desire to collaborate, especially with one another. A number of respondents noted that women seek out collaborations with one another and with males, but males rarely seek to collaborate with women. Ways to further support collaboration between women and to incentivise gender diverse collaboration are welcomed.

Participants were concerned by decreasing support for music programs in schools, especially in remote regions. Whilst there are great resources available through programs like *The Song Room*, these are of little value if there is no teacher. Concern was also voiced about the lack of participation by older girls and women in VET courses and whether these and Higher Education music curricula best serve current & anticipated industry needs. The lack of music teachers in rural and remote regions also means decreased resources within local music scenes as teachers are often skilled performers, band or choir leaders and often have experience in organising local events.

Concern was also expressed that most of the “music development” type activities offered in regional/remote areas is provided by Fly In Fly Out projects (FIFO) – eg interstate Hip Hop week long programs that produce a snappy video but leave very little else in the community. These cost heaps which could be put back into regular programs and building local hubs or mentor pools to support

communities to upskill. Coupled with this is the need for regular, basic industry workshops targeting women and young people.

The need for women as role models was emphasised throughout the consultations and has been a keynote of MusicNTs Indigenous women's programs, including building support for Indigenous role models. "You gotta see it to be it" is one of the most common phrases our women's program staff hear, followed closely by "when one of us shines, we all shine" with Indigenous programs.

Many of these findings can – and need - to be embedded within MusicNTs broader initiatives including our ongoing strategic directions, the **Live Music Strategy** and **Safe Venues Project**, and support our regular programs including the **Indigenous Women's Music Program** and our industry workshop series.

Whilst there is a long way to go to reach gender equity within the NT music scene, there is no shortage of practical and creative solutions. This plan provides a starting point. Participants are keen for these conversations to continue, for talk to become action and for an evaluation system to be implemented so we can measure change, celebrate achievements and know where best to place scarce resources.

The plan provides strategies that are either already being actioned by MusicNT or can be readily implemented without major additional investment, along with recommended longer term actions or initiatives that require additional sponsorship, collaboration with other organisations and individuals and which are required for lasting change which will benefit ALL.

**Recommended next steps include:**

- Launching this plan on IWD, 2021 at the 4 sites visited for group consultations & supporting local groups to stages these events including featuring live music from local female musicians
- MusicNT to consult with local stakeholders about forming hubs in each of the 4 sites to support local women in music and to develop and implement regional plans for women in music
- MusicNT to ensure gender diversity is measured/monitored and factored into all events we present or sponsor and to highlight the benefits of and advocate for inclusive programming with event organisers, venues and musicians
- MusicNT to resume providing Production101 workshops in Alice Springs (pending COVID) including sessions for women/nb participants, investigate providing these in other locations and review our overall workshop program to ensure a sufficient proportion of these are at entry level
- Recommendations pertaining to remote work to be considered by IWMP and RAMP programs within MusicNT
- Recommendations pertaining to women in the live music scene or venue safety to be considered as part of the Live Music Strategy, Safe Venues project and any other relevant MusicNT initiatives

## ONE: SCHOOL/RTO BASED MUSIC EDUCATION

*“It was much better in <our regional town> and the surrounding communities ten years ago. We had a dedicated teacher who would rotate through the communities visiting each for a week. There’s been nothing for a few years now.”*

*“We only have a \$1,000 music budget each year...I’ve got more funding in through applying for grants, which I am happy to do, but it’s on top of my usual teaching workload.”*

Schools are an essential component to the development of a thriving music scene – through inspiring students to create their own works, encouraging music appreciation and offering a broad range of opportunities for relevant skills development.

A lack of regular music activities within schools was noted across all regions, including dedicated music teachers, the positioning of music within the overall curriculum and in some cases the type of activities that were included in courses. Whilst online support is available, primarily through **The Song Room**, which is considered to be an excellent resource for teachers, this can’t be activated without teacher support.

*“You can have great resources online but they’re of little use if there is no teacher.”*

All groups noted that sport is compulsory through High School whilst music is an elective for only 6 months with little opportunity for progression. The NT **Sports Voucher Scheme** was seen as having potential to add to music development type activities, particularly in remote locations, as it also includes *“recreation and cultural activities”*. Every school-enrolled student from preschool to year 12 (including home schooled children) is eligible for \$200 per year. In urban areas parents or carers apply for vouchers whereas in remote communities the scheme is managed through Regional Councils who can select activities from a list of registered providers. As one participant said *“well, the name says it all – it only mentions sport, not music”*. As at Oct 2020, from a list of 23 providers, only 5 offered music related activities (3 x Hip Hop, 1 x song-writing, 1 x group rhythm & percussion, 1 x music/choir)

Other concerns included a lowering of standards for beginner students at University level which was seen as contributing to the devaluing of arts and music education, a push away from contemporary to classical music which is not necessarily what industry wants or needs, and that there are very few women or older girls enrolled in VET music and industry courses, especially in production skills.

Given the economic contribution of the live music scene to the NT economy, a strong case could be made that musicianship, song writing and broader music industry skills (event management, arts administration, venue management, production skills, etc, etc) be viewed as “genuine” employment or career paths and prioritised as such within the broader education system.

AIMS	STRATEGIES
Schools, TAFEs and Higher Education institutions provide quality music education that teaches relevant industry skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lobby education department for music teachers in all primary and secondary public schools and for roving teachers through remote regions</li> <li>● MNT presence at Career Expos in urban centres promoting music industry as viable career option</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lobby for curriculum overhaul at secondary, VET and Higher Ed levels including ensuring courses include women’s music in teaching resources</li> <li>● Advocate for the establishment of a dedicated performing arts college for the NT</li> </ul>
Increased enrolments and completions by women studying production, event management or other music industry skills at VET and Higher Education levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collate stats on providers, courses, enrolments, completions across NT by gender &amp; region over past 5 years (MNT &amp; RTOs)</li> <li>● Review stats annually (MNT &amp; RTOs)</li> <li>● Advocate for female/nb identified places in VET and Uni courses</li> <li>● Advocate for scholarships for female/nb identified places in VET and Uni courses</li> </ul>
Increased uptake in “sports voucher” system being used to support music and performance activities in regional and remote NT schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote availability of voucher system being used for music activities</li> <li>● Promote scheme to potential NT based music providers to register with</li> <li>● Investigate MNT capacity to register as a provider</li> <li>● Lobby for the scheme’s name to be changed to reflect inclusion of creative industries and arts</li> </ul>

## TWO: MUSIC DEVELOPMENT (OUTSIDE SCHOOL OR RTOs)

### AVAILABILITY OF MUSIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Building a thriving music scene requires regular development activities and opportunities for structured growth including the chance to “have a go.” This is partly why jam sessions and open mic style events are such a critical part of the overall music community, along with music being valued more and better integrated within education curricula. Community choirs, brass bands and ensembles are also great ways to enjoy music, socialise with others and pick up more skills.

All groups commented on the lack of resources for women’s music development. ***“this is not likely to change. What are our priorities? There’s a great need for partnerships, longevity and offering return visits or workshop series.”*** Participants were particularly concerned by the lack of structured, regular music development opportunities, especially in remote regions and the continued reliance on FIFO hip hop or similar programs, often run by interstate providers.

Some participants think that there are fewer resources going into regular music activities now than there were some years ago. Most of the current resources are put into ***“quick fix (mainly) interstate hip hop programs that visit for a week, pump out a video and song or two, leave and then post on their private social media. There’s nothing left with the community other than the video and there can be issues with copyright. These programs don’t provide skills development for locals. They cost lots and this could be put back into regular programs and mentoring programs for mentors.”***

MusicNTs **Divas** and **Sista Sounds** programs were consistently cited as being about the only ongoing music development opportunities for women and viewed as being useful & successful models, except that they lack the resources required to operate regularly enough, especially in remote locations. ***Nothing happens for women and girls in between Sista Sounds visits and these can only happen in 3 or 4 communities twice a year. Women in our community need a space to practice, consistency and experienced teachers.”***

Participants commented on the difficulty in engaging with teenage girls and keeping them involved in programs ***Men and boys develop their music through all the other male role models and through being able to actively participate.*** and ***“you run workshops and all the little kids come: the 15+ year old girls are all into TikTok. We need to start opportunities early and before the girls get shy and too many messages around NOT engaging with music.”***

Whilst this is true for most teenaged girls, it is particularly so for Indigenous young women from remote communities. Along with generally being shy, nervous, not wanting to stand out from the crowd, and being subjected to harassment or jealousy from males if they do sing or play better, cultural norms and traditions support gender segregation within communities and are further entrenched by sexist beliefs or attitudes. Boys learn from fathers or uncles and whilst a few women might play keyboard or acoustic guitar they are most likely to play or sing with church-based choirs. Additionally, spaces such as band or music rooms, recording and radio studios are almost invariably occupied by men and boys and therefore taboo for women and girls. Remote schools often have music rooms and equipment but it depends on the Principal and teaching staff how open they are to these resources being used by community or out of school hours. In fact, this is why MusicNT started the **Sista Sounds** remote music development program for girls and women a decade ago – to provide role models, music development activities and to advocate for community resources to be allocated to support women’s and girls’ music.

There are a growing number of exceptions to the above, the most notable currently being **Ripple Effect Band** from Maningrida. As band member and manager Jodie Kell said ***“It’s hard not to get kicked off the stage - literally. This is changing in Maningrida as Ripple Effect are now running the PA for more gigs and have learned how to control the stage... When Ripple Effect started up, lots of fellas wanted to play the backing instruments and have female singers but the women wanted to learn how to play instruments themselves and to get their own band together... when we play at community festivals we need to wait, surrounded by male bands, for the practice rooms to be available. Women are not allowed in when men are there and there is a lack of affordable practice spaces big enough for our band when we do visit Darwin.”***

Unsurprisingly, where suitably skilled women are employed by RIMOs (Remote Indigenous Media Organisations like PAW Media and TEABBA) or within youth, sport and recreation programs, women and girls are far more likely to participate in activities. The lack of women playing instruments and/or being able to create their own beats or do live electronic mixing was also raised constantly through this consultation and has been raised frequently throughout our **Divas** sessions which, to date, have mainly focussed on singing and songwriting. “Learn how to sing or play a musical instrument” was one of the most difficult things survey respondents saw for women and girls (see appendix). Women and girls need access to both instruments/computer programs and to regular tuition for this to occur. This is well beyond MusicNTs current capacity and arguably our current charter.

As with many industries servicing remote communities, there is little coordination between music development providers. There can be economies of scale when providing blocks of activities across a region and there could be better outcomes if different providers shared more about their objectives and these were better matched with community needs. Identifying and supporting key providers located within the NT rather than continually relying on Fly In Fly Out providers from interstate has clear benefits for musicians and song writers in remote communities (see next section also).

## **AVAILABILITY OF LOCAL MENTORS**

***“Fly In Fly Out (FIFO) actually takes away from regional towns rather than giving more to them.”***

We have transient populations across the NT and all groups noted that too often programs stop when the person driving them leaves, especially in smaller towns and communities. ***“It would be great if we could get a musical couple to come and stay. It was great when Rachel was in town for a year – she was a great role model, instrumentalist and singer”.***

***“When you create spaces, you need people to manage them – they often fall over when key people leave and all the instruments are locked away.”*** As with schools, there is often infrastructure from regional youth programs setting up equipment and computers with **Garageband** as part of remote service delivery, but these need ongoing maintenance and someone on the ground providing ongoing skills development AND ensuring that girls and women can access these.

***Divas has been one of the few real development programs in our region, plus Bush Bands which is male dominated.*** MusicNT has brought in quality female mentors over the years and is continuing to focus on skilling up local mentors, especially Indigenous musicians, to run our programs. We are gradually building more sustainable local mentor pools and have been seeking funding to provide mentor camps which would bring NT and interstate mentors together to learn from one another and extend networks of support.

***There is a huge need to skill and empower local people to play, write songs, run workshops, produce or stage community concerts and to fix and maintain instruments and other gear.*** Initiatives like MusicNTs **RAMP (Regional Areas Music Program** which visits remote communities across the NT often working in tandem with **Sista Sounds**), and **Barkly Regional Arts WMC (Winanjikarri Music Centre)** are essential in supporting this but are spread far too thinly. Such programs also need to have agreements and processes in place to support women’s access to instruments, tuition and other resources that are available. Programs need to ***work with potential female leaders, giving them every opportunity to hone their craft and develop leadership skills to be able to lead in two cultures.*** MusicNT is gradually integrating this within our **RAMP** program as well as the focus on singing and songwriting through **Divas**.

## **WOMEN AS ROLE MODELS**

***“You gotta see it to be it”*** was echoed through the consultation, with all groups and many individual respondents commenting on how imperative it is that girls and women have strong, approachable and honest role models to aspire to and learn from. Supporting the development of local mentors is a critical component to this, showing that it is possible for **local** women to lead as well as participate in music, especially in remote communities.

Francesca Valence’s ***I Heart Songwriting Club*** was cited as an outstanding national example of a program supporting gender diversity. It has around 60% female membership whereas APRA membership is around 20%. When asked why, Francesca responded saying ***“its positive role modelling, leadership by example and being an inspiration for other women and girls that they can do it too.”*** <https://www.iheartsongwritingclub.com/>

Women’s subject matter when writing lyrics reflect their experiences of the world and participants – and MusicNT - are keen that women’s stories are heard, along with their music.

A number of female participants observed that women’s own socialising around not putting themselves forward or being almost apologetic when receiving an award or compliment also holds them back and cited **Her Sound, Her Story** as being a powerful documentary about women’s experiences in the music industry and the need for change. <http://www.hersoundherstory.com> ***“its***

***ok if you are more extroverted, confident and skilled. Too many women don't have a voice, are vulnerable and fear repercussions if they speak out.*** Not surprisingly, one way forward is by providing ***“leadership workshops – building confidence, overcoming limiting beliefs and stage nerves to help cultivate empowerment and resilience in women.”***

A key aspect of effective mentoring is being able to give accurate yet encouraging feedback. As one participant put it ***“be honest. Don't overinflate ability if not there yet but always support and offer experiences that assist in growth and confidence.”*** This in turn requires the opportunity for mentors and participants to develop trust and rapport with one another slowly and gradually through regular programs.

## **OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN TECHNICAL AND PRODUCTION SKILLS**

There were many comments around the lack of women in the technical side of the music industry – as sound engineers, running recording studios and labels, live music production, mastering and so on. ***“It can be really intimidating for anyone getting into self-production and recording”*** (male participant). ***“It's hugely male dominated. The ability to get your music recorded maintaining your individual voice is hugely important.”*** (male participant)

In recognition of this, in 2019 MusicNT provided **Production Skills 101** workshops in Alice Springs including designated sessions for female/nb participants. Pending COVID19 restrictions, MusicNT plans to reinstate these and investigate offering them in other locations along with continuing to promote opportunities for women to learn these skills through other courses or mentoring programs.

## **MUSIC, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

***“Mental health” can be a big barrier for women. It's true for many artists but I see these issues play out differently or in more pronounced ways with my female muso friends, especially around their inner critic, negative self-talk and extreme anxiety around performance”*** (male participant)

There has been an increasing spotlight on mental health within the Australian music industry in recent years and MusicNT has partnered with mental health specialists including **Support Act** and the **Mental Health Association of Central Australia (MHACA)** in providing workshops in 2019 and 2020 addressing this. Clearly COVID19 has exacerbated existing issues and MusicNT is keen for all musicians and broader industry personnel to know about and feel confident in reaching out to organisations like **Support Act** for professional support, including women.

In 2019 in partnership with **APRA AMCOS**, MusicNT presented a workshop in Darwin facilitated by Viv Fantin specifically for women musicians and called **“Tune Out Your Inner Critic”**. Viv previously headed up the Big Day Out Festival, had & recovered from a breakdown she speaks publicly about and now provides coaching services for musicians and other creatives. The session was well received by over 80 women including our Central Australian Manager who now shares insights from this with as many others as she can. Programs like **Divas** also support Indigenous girls and women through some of these challenges. More sessions like Viv's plus opportunities to share tips on overcoming debilitating anxiety or self-talk in more regions would do a lot to reduce isolation and increase individual resilience.

Whilst music can be a “saviour”, it can also be a “destroyer” when it comes to taking the plunge and putting our work out there, especially perhaps songs or music we have created ourselves. One participant expressed this as follows:

***“My own life journey has meant I don't have the struggles of children or family, so my experience of seeking to become a "woman in music" hasn't had to navigate those challenges. The challenges I've experienced are more in the "invisible" or "systemic" tone of the world, which can be hard to articulate or describe, and sometimes I think I am just going crazy!***

***I am a trained performer. But I'm not a trained musician. Music to me is a form of healing, connection, celebration of embodiment, a means of leaning into expression, and a way to allow space for some of the more universal sense of things to come in to play. It's something I can turn to at any time: when life feels raw and on the edge of impossible as much as when life feels alive with possibility and flow. I'm so grateful for it!***

***When it comes to taking that next step--that risk of sharing creations and expression beyond my living-room bubble--I've found the existing jam spaces widely varied in their sense of safety for that to happen.”***

The healing power of music was also commented on by others, with one respondent also noting that currently there are only three registered music therapy practitioners in the NT. Several also commented on music’s role in strengthening culture: ***it would be interesting to see a focus on what women elders would like to see, including their music both singing and rhythm and dancing.*** MusicNTs experience through offering programs like **Sista Sounds** is that, just like mainstream Australian culture, elders are generally into different music than their younger relatives and our role is primarily to support contemporary music making. Having said that, where possible we also support broader music making within communities and often this includes engaging with older women who are into gospel music, cover songs and sing-alongs.

Music is often also linked in with health or youth initiatives – for instance via group song writing about specific health concerns such as Trachoma, alcohol and other drugs and family violence. This can be a powerful experience especially for program participants and their immediate networks. However, this is different again to creating music pathways and providing regular music development activities.

AIMS	STRATEGIES
Sustainable, regular, progressive, culturally appropriate music development programs for women and girls, including in remote communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extension of Sista Sounds or similar programs - including for all girls and women</li> <li>● Development of appropriate, comprehensive step by step resources</li> <li>● Lobby NT Ed /remote/youth/LGANT for local providers rather than FIFO</li> </ul>
A more coordinated approach to the delivery of music activities in remote communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encouragement of “hubs”</li> <li>● Revive and coordinate a network for remote music program delivery (MNT, RIMOs, ACs/TOs, RCs, Youth &amp; health services)</li> </ul>
The development, maintenance and strengthening of local mentor pools & role models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mentor training camps – regular</li> <li>● Opportunities for mentors from different regions to come together to share experiences and strategies</li> <li>● Tailored support for individual mentors – both through IWMP and through broader women’s initiatives.</li> </ul>
Accessible music spaces for women and girls in remote communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continued advocacy with RIMOs, ACs/TOs, RCs</li> </ul>

Increased support for the maintenance of music spaces in remote communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continued advocacy with RIMOs, ACs/TOs, RCs</li> <li>● Continued provision (potential expansion of) RAMP services linked in with IWMP/Sista Sounds</li> </ul>
More women skilled as technicians and sound engineers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advocacy for women’s spots in VET (see schools)</li> <li>● Production Skills 101 provided regularly in Alice Springs and Darwin including dedicated workshops for women. Investigate opportunity to provide in Tennant Creek via WMC in partnership with BRA</li> </ul>
Support for women struggling with mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Women, music and mental health workshop/s in Darwin and Alice Springs, &amp; the topic to be included in next industry conference or similar event</li> <li>● Women’s informal networks available for peer support (See collaboration) – MNT role to support and link women together and with relevant professional supports</li> <li>● Promote Support Act for women</li> </ul>

### THREE: ACCESS AND INCLUSION

*“Women are generally not selfish – we create spaces for all and our industry needs to create spaces for women, for child care and for events at different times and in different venues to suit families”*

#### AVAILABILITY OF VENUES, IN GENERAL

All regions noted that there were relatively few venues that supported original music. In smaller centres like Tennant Creek and Katherine options reduce even further. Regardless of the genre of music, it depends on the venue owners how live music is managed and concern was expressed that overall opportunities were decreasing in some regions, not increasing **“15 years ago there were band nights here that attracted audiences of around 500. This doesn’t happen now.”**

Publicly funded community arts spaces were also seen in some cases as being underutilised resources which could be activated. **“Places like XXX could do a lot more to support community based music and opportunities for artists at all levels.”** Participants also commented on more support being provided by some regional or local councils than others – for instance, Darwin City Council has banned buskers and Katherine Regional Council turned down a \$20K grant to upgrade venues and provide more support for live music within their municipality. On the flip side, other participants noted stronger support from initiatives such as Darwin City Council’s **Lunch on the Lawns** and Alice Springs Town Council’s **11to1** series both of which provided employment and exposure for a gender diverse group of musicians and other industry personnel, along with activating CBDs and enabling audiences to enjoy local, original music.

It was also noted that the National Live Music Strategy funding of \$20,000 to pay for artists and to broker events could be promoted more widely and eligible groups encouraged to take advantage of this.

#### JAMS AND OPEN MICS

*"I see jam spaces as a great potential stepping-stone between lounge-room and solo gig! So I feel like the overall diversity of the music scene here would increase if jam spaces held better room for it.*

*Without a musically confident person actively doing the "invisible labour" of creating some safe "room" in a jam space, I've experienced women having their mics turned off, being spoken or sung over, not being able to get access to microphones, being hustled off stage, having the key and rhythm changed on them as soon as they get up the courage to sing, and even having men yell "Shame!" at them because they dared to join in on a song that men were already singing in.*

*It seems to require a degree of effort, courage, defiance, emotional labour and a mild degree of commitment to what might even be called anarchy...*

*It would be amazing to have jam spaces where safety and diversity are core elements, and where those facilitating understand how to do the labour needed to make musical expression safe for more types of people, who are each navigating their own layers of "invisible risk" when they take a deep breath and actually get on the stage. I wonder if there's a kind of "invisible risks" awareness training that could happen one day? (I am sure there's a better title out there!)"*

3 of 4 regions noted that open mic and jam sessions can be intimidating, aren't that family friendly, in several regions have all male performers or house bands and that **"we can be skilled and confident in what we're doing but easily dismissed or ignored by males organising or MCing events. From an outsider's point of view it doesn't look inclusive."** Given the critical role these events play in enabling musicians to network with one another, to try out new material and to increase confidence and competence in live performance, open mic and jam sessions need to be as welcoming as possible.

**"We need women to step forward and men to make space for this."**

## TIME AND LOCATION OF GIGS

**Venues are businesses which are run around serving alcohol and food. Live music is secondary to this yet ironically people are often there for the music.** This can be difficult if people don't want to be around alcohol and problematic for those women whose music is not suited to the café style environment that most "dry" gigs are held in or who are ready to perform at bigger events.

Concern was expressed around venues needing training in making them safer spaces for women, especially at late night gigs. **"Something along the lines of the Vic Governments training for venues and awareness campaign to stamp out harassment at venues is really needed."**

**"What with late gigs and grog, it's a hard industry for women, especially Mums."** Regardless of venue safety, it makes many events **"difficult to balance with family responsibilities or inappropriate to bring children to."**

**"Family groups gather to support women's AFL. There's no grog and it makes for a great afternoon where families can come together. It would be great to have afternoon tea style events which also include live music."**

Once again, initiatives like **11to1** staged by Alice Springs Town Council and **Lunch on the Lawns** by Darwin City Council, along with cafes offering live music are great examples of family friendly events which open up CBDs and community spaces, showcase a gender diverse range of local musicians and support the ongoing creation of original work.

## NAVIGATING YOUR WAY INTO AND THROUGH THE NT MUSIC SCENE

The music industry has become a complex organism which requires knowledge and confidence to navigate, especially for those with the skills and aptitude to aspire to forming a career in music.

Proper pathways for women would include:

- School based music programs
- external workshops and/or tuition
- informal sessions – e.g. guitar roundtable idea where a guitar is passed around the room and women share songs & feedback with each other; setting up a group to practice together or to support one another at open mic sessions or gigs
- support from Council, peaks and venues
- a variety of places to gig – different genres, times
- opportunities to record & publish original music
- more programs, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous working together
- support in knowing what is around and how to access it at different stages of career and life

**Divas** was established in 2010 as a music development program in Alice Springs by female Indigenous singer songwriters for female Indigenous singer songwriters and to provide the support they were NOT getting from broader industry. Divas has aimed to provide the following, which was recommended by one respondent as a supportive pathway:

***Working with strong Indigenous female role model musicians to develop their skills around; performance, stagecraft, live performance, putting a gig together, promoting the gig, press releases, bios, providing opportunities to showcase their music and talent, more advanced songwriting workshops, recording. Bringing in experienced performers to help these artists will foster skill sets that are valuable not only to their present work but also to their future careers and through the creation of symbiotic relationships that will be beneficial to both parties. Then give them platforms to where aspiring emerging female artists can take note.***

Divas only has capacity to offer relatively short annual seasons (currently 10 - 12 weeks) in two locations and we are investigating how best to support artists in between these. We also currently need more development programs to support both Indigenous and non-Indigenous *mentors* and are balancing providing work for local mentors with bringing in specialist support from interstate. There is strong evidence that having a Divas style program but making it open to all women to participate in would be of great benefit to the music scene overall. Some participants from Tennant Creek and Katherine commented that in smaller communities such as theirs, it made better sense to offer “open” programs in their community. This needs to be researched more extensively - and directly with these communities - least the few gains made by Indigenous women and girls are lost, particularly as the majority of people who advocated for open workshops are non-Indigenous.

The issues facing women who are navigating industry are essentially the same as for anyone else – knowing who to approach around putting on events, what to expect from a venue, how to negotiate reasonable pay or run a small business, being a manager and so on. All this takes away from creative and rehearsal time and much of it requires a different skill set to being a musician or performer. HOWEVER, these impact on women more in that so many are already time poor and not being taken seriously or being treated professionally within industry itself. ***We need more support for organizing***

***recording, gigs and tours - even just having someone who knows contacts that can help NT women network with those contacts.***

MusicNT currently has two part time roles which primarily focus on artist support – our Artist Support position located in Darwin (male) and our Indigenous Music Development Officer located in Alice Springs (female). Our Artist Support Officer has great depth of knowledge and direct experience broadly within industry and also works part time for APRA AMCOS. Other positions across MusicNT also do a certain amount of this and it is concerning if these services are either not known by industry or seen as inaccessible for women. It was recommended that our artist support position and services be promoted more widely or regularly and that MusicNT ***“needs a major shift and active promotions so people can see the changes.”***

Another stated that there’s a need for a more permanent MusicNT physical presence in Tennant Creek: whilst we would love to provide this, it is currently outside our capacity. We will however continue to explore opportunities to work more within smaller regions, particularly through regional partnerships.

## **MUMS IN MUSIC**

***The biggest issue for me as a working mum is finding time/space to be creative while maintaining my parenting responsibilities.***

***As a full time working mum it is simply so hard to be able to contribute creatively. I find myself completely exhausted from my responsibilities and it feels like I have to push myself so hard to be able to keep my creative dreams alive. At this stage in my life being creative comes at a cost to my energy levels and my family, but it is also the thing that keeps me going, and helps me rise above the monotony of working life and keeping a family afloat.***

***In a small remote and regional town, very few people can make a living out of being a musician. Most of us have to work, and then find moments where we can to still fulfil our creative dreams. Most of us never get paid, and often have to self fund our work. Grant writing takes hours and it's hard to find the energy and time, to get the quotes and letters of support, after working a full day and then getting kids organised and into bed.***

Although there were no direct questions in any of the consultation platforms around parenting, many Mums stated that their biggest issue in maintaining their creativity and musical development was actually being a Mother. There were numerous comments around how difficult it is to get back into gigging and so on after having children and the additional costs involved in maintaining a musical career if you are a mum, especially as a sole parent. A telling example of this was an older creative who said that music education through school was invaluable and helped her develop skills. She went on to be a performer in her own right, had children and stopped. She now supports her own children with their music and arts careers. This is a common story.

***You have to be organised at home before you even get to go out – even if you have a gig you have to sort your family and kids and everything else. (single mum)***

It was also noted that living in remote locations can make childcare difficult to find, especially when children are no longer eligible for day care, there are no Outside School Hours Care programs running and private child care or babysitting services are expensive and hard to find. This often impacts on non-Indigenous female musicians who have moved to the NT and do not have extended family

networks able to assist, and on Indigenous females in there generally being higher expectations that they provide primary care, having bigger families but fewer individuals who are in a position to actively support mums in music and having less overall resources to go round.

Even where male partners are fully supportive, the reality can be that they earn the bulk of the family income and the bills need to be paid so their work is automatically prioritised within the family unit. As observed by one participant, ***there are lots of events and workshops which are promoted at the last minute across the music scene.*** Given families often need time to coordinate everyone's activities, this can prevent Mums or primary care givers from participating.

## ONGOING SEXIST ATTITUDES AROUND WOMEN IN MUSIC

***"I get so many patronising attitudes and just not being taken seriously. People say "it's nice that you have a hobby, dear" rather than song writing and music making being seen as a viable career and supported as such."***

***"I get tired of the constant comparisons, especially as my (male) partner is also a recognised musician. People saying things like "who do you think is better – him or you?"***

Comments from 2 leading musicians

Put succinctly, ***"women need respect and a go."*** Put bluntly, we need to ***"change society so males aren't such dicks."***

The root cause of women's marginalisation as musicians is sexist (and ageist) attitudes towards women and girls. This can manifest as anything from the live music scene being built largely around pubs, clubs and late night gigs to women's greater role as family care givers to being excluded or belittled at jams or being treated unprofessionally by male technicians or producers to not being represented on boards or in positions of power and authority. As mentioned in the introduction, massive social agendas like these need sustained action at all levels to shift attitudes and beliefs along with the prevailing culture within the Australian music industry itself. Even small changes take a long time to impact across large population groups. As one respondent put it, we need ***broadscale efforts and strategies to smash destructive stereotypes.***

Another telling observation is that ***"There's no disparity between males and females to access instrumental lessons here, but there's a disparity when it comes to being treated like a professional during performances and gigs. For example, for student recordings, sound engineers will approach male students like they are professional musicians and give them direct feedback. Whereas, whether or not the female student plays confidently or not, sound engineers will offer them advice like 'it's okay if you make a mistake, we'll edit it out', or 'just play your best, it doesn't matter'. These kind of comments, although supposed to be supportive in nature, shows the disparity in society that we think boys make better musicians and girls just aren't skilled enough."***

A number of participants talked about the two different types of jealousy that can impact negatively on musicians, especially women. The first is around jealousy from over-controlling male partners or family members when women start gigging or going out socially or more independently. The second emerges when women actually play or sing or write better than their male counterparts.

***"There can be jealousy and coercive elements from males in music... We get comments like "I could manage your (all female) band." Or "Man! You're a good drummer [wait for it...] for a chick"***

A number of female respondents commented that *men simply don't see the problem* and *we need women's reality to be reflected*. MusicNT was seen rightly as having a key role to play here as peak body. We need to be modelling behaviours and attitudes ourselves if we expect these to be adopted more widely across industry and we need to continue to find constructive ways to address unsavoury or unhelpful attitudes and behaviours, or worse, when we witness them or they come to our attention. MusicNT sees a strong role for the **Safe Venues Project** in encouraging this during live music events and is firmly committed to actioning the recommendations from this consultation where possible and where relevant to our role.

AIMS	STRATEGIES
Increased opportunities for women to perform, including more women's music events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ensure women in music are catered for as part of ongoing roll out of Live Music Strategy across the NT</li> <li>● women in music hubs established in 4 urban regions</li> <li>● strategy for establishing remote hub/s for women in music</li> <li>● advocacy with TourismNT and local councils so Tourism/Buy Darwin or similar vouchers can be used to include live music, equipment or tuition</li> <li>● advocacy for continued and increased diversity in location, time, etc of gigs – activate more community spaces, more all ages and family friendly events and gigs – link with Live Music Strategy</li> </ul>
Inclusive jams/open mic style events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● guidelines for running open mic/jams developed and promoted by MusicNT</li> <li>● discussions in Alice Springs and Darwin around making music scene more inclusive for ALL marginalised groups</li> <li>● support for running women's jam nights?</li> </ul>
Safer venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ensure relevant findings from this consultation are integrated within Safe Venues project</li> <li>● continue discussions re: guidelines etc for venues/punters/etc</li> </ul>
More support for women in navigating the music scene & industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● hold regular "introduction to the music scene" online panel discussions or workshops</li> <li>● develop, promote, offer &amp; evaluate an introductory workshop program <i>for women</i> (but available to all to participate in?). Include – negotiating with venues, promotions, licensing, who is who &amp; what do they do, doing a live gig; recording options, how to be prepared, costs; promotions and artist pages</li> <li>● through HUBS – location specific strategies for women to practice together, organise support posses for events, etc</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regularly promote WHO to go to for artist support across MusicNT &amp; the role of relevant positions (currently Phillip and Jessie but most of us do some degree of this)</li> </ul>
More support for Mums in music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advocate with funding bodies for additional resources for women’s applications to cover extra costs such as child care, cots, prams, etc</li> <li>advocate for support from festivals for childcare, etc</li> <li>see previous comments around diversity in events, times, locations</li> </ul>
Constructive ways to address sexist attitudes when we encounter them in our industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sector discussion around this</li> <li>protocols or guidelines around expectations and how to actively support gender diversity</li> </ul>

## FOUR: PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

### WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION AND OPPORTUNITIES TO FULLY PARTICIPATE AS ARTISTS OR IN OTHER ROLES ACROSS INDUSTRY

*In order to develop as artists or technicians, women need access to the live scene.*

*Music is a human activity, not limited to any one gender, cultural group, etc, and everyone misses out if one half of our population are limited or seen as less or whatever. It diminishes us all.*

Women in Darwin and Alice Springs reported that there were sufficient performance opportunities, including from tourism, corporate gigs, Town Council sponsored events, as well as regular gigs or open mic/jam sessions, community festivals and other major events. However, it was difficult even for more established female artists or technicians with interstate and international experience to book a headline. Also **women don’t get booked as session musicians or techies and so on. There are women with as much or more skills as the fellas out there across industry but we are simply not getting the work**” and **“Major Events seem to select from a small group of artists, mainly bands.”** A recent major concert in Darwin featured an all male line up except Sarah McLeod **“when I asked the private promoter why he said it’s not about gender: it’s about audience engagement. Women are not seen as being essential to our industry.”**

Women’s participation and representation varies across musical genres. Brass bands, chamber ensembles, choirs or orchestras all have relatively high proportions of women and girls singing or playing, with some having a majority of females and there are an increasing number of female classical composers. However, it was also noted that most conductors, executive or creative directors and those in charge across such genres and groups are males which meant that there has been little shift in artistic leadership and direction.

The contemporary live and recording music scenes are pretty much **“all fellas with guitars or doing the production and linked in with pub culture.”**

Many participants were strongly in favour of having quotas with most advocating for equal representation and several commenting that if there is evidence of massive marginalisation then maybe the aim should be 70/30 until things level out. Affirmative action promotes awareness of gender equity and diversity and gives targets to work towards and evidence of change. Other participants were concerned that quotas promote the ongoing “pigeonholing” of women’s music and to perceptions that “she only got the gig because she’s a woman” or “because she’s Indigenous.”

***“Women need inclusion, not boxes”***

Caiti Baker observed that ***“media coverage for Settle Down Sisters is all around being women and not around being musicians”*** - MusicNT has heard this from the vast majority of female musicians we interact with. Shellie Morris also noted ***“When I started performing at Woodforde Festival it was on the “Indigenous stage”. It was great that there were opportunities for First Nations artists and the Festival organisers clearly wanted to support us. But we got stuck on that stage and then weren’t included in the broader program. It’s becoming a lot more integrated now which is how it should be.”***

A non-Indigenous respondent stated ***inclusive programming means having structures to support diversity and elevating marginalised voices but separating people into programs based on their cultural identity is divisive and doesn’t foster an environment of collaboration.*** Based on what we’ve heard through these consultations and our work over many years, MusicNT agrees with this whilst maintaining that right now marginalised groups also need affirmative action including dedicated programs which equip them with the skills and confidence literally to be able to take the next step in mixing with more diverse groups of musicians. MusicNT is committed to consulting directly with affected groups or communities before abandoning or opening up programs which have been implemented specifically to address Indigenous and/or women’s disadvantage. As part of this, there is a need to ***prioritise career development for people experiencing multiple oppressions – queer, disabled, non-binary, trans, Indigenous, POC.***

Clearly change is needed at many levels and any campaigns around quotas also need to be accompanied by other strategies promoting or highlighting women’s skills and achievements, along with a clear rationale for their introductions. MusicNT is keen to hear more from industry around the pros and cons of introducing quotas to our work and advocating that other industry bodies do similarly and will undertake further consultations around this in 2021.

**AGEISM**

A number of respondents commented on ageism within the music industry. Again, this is the same across Australia – and internationally – but it affects women differently, and probably more profoundly than men, especially when linked to sexism.

At one end of the spectrum, people aged over about 35, especially women, are excluded or are expected to look or behave in a certain way. At the other end, 15 – 16 year olds with a pop sound are being pounced upon before they have the maturity or experience as performers to know what they want and the confidence to negotiate with producers or labels around the image they want to portray.

Generally, images of women in music via media promote stereotypes and persist in using sexist imagery to sell songs. As one more established artist put it ***“I got more likes for a photo on my artist page of me with my bum hanging out than I have for any featuring my music.”*** We are starting to

see pushback from artists like *Tones and I* and *GFlip* wearing baggy clothes and refusing to buy into commercial industry stereotypes.

AIMS	STRATEGIES
<p>A more representative music scene across all areas of industry – singing, song writing, playing instruments, live &amp; recorded production, event management, artist management, recording labels, peaks...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish, implement, promote and review internal gender equity guidelines for all MusicNT events (or events that we support, partner or sponsor in any way), website, social media, awards, etc</li> <li>● Establish and promote gender equity guidelines for NT events and funding proposals – strategy for this</li> <li>● “Start up” activities or groups in each of the 4 main regions and as many remote communities/council areas as possible – hubs</li> <li>● Promotion of issues relevant to NT women in music to national groups including major festivals, BigSound, APRA, etc</li> <li>● Women in music festival or conference? (or hold one day of a mainstream event focusing on women in music??)</li> <li>● Women’s songwriting comp?</li> <li>● Women’s composition comp?</li> <li>● Women’s conducting comp?</li> </ul>
<p>Pigeon holing/ inclusive programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discussions/sector debate around how to create more representative music scenes including gender diverse panel discussing gender diversity. Promote this as affecting and potentially benefitting the WHOLE scene, not just women (see references to conferences, workshop program)</li> <li>● Awareness campaign around quotas, inclusive programming and affirmative action</li> </ul>
<p>Ageism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● See strategies promoting a variety of venues/times/genres</li> <li>● Also links with self promotions and awareness around creating brands below</li> </ul>

## FIVE: COLLABORATION

### COLLABORATION BETWEEN WOMEN

The most outstanding feature – and strength - of NT women in music is the extent and quality of collaboration between women, especially in Alice Springs and Darwin where the scenes themselves are larger.

Such initiatives are organised by women and range from informal catch ups through to forming bands, supporting one another on and off stage, forming collectives of women who perform together and

curating women's gigs and festivals which showcase original work by women. This needs to be further strengthened and supported where possible, including making some efforts towards compensating the enormous amount of voluntary work key individuals do supporting foundational music development that has a demonstrable ripple effect throughout the broader industry.

The following women artists were all mentioned by others as demonstrating leadership, positive role modelling, generosity and/or participated in group sessions and talked about their contributions.

#### **XAVIA NOU ( X A V I A - Alice Springs)**

- Began by offering regular women's gatherings where everyone shared a cuppa and brought an original song to play. This enabled a group of local women to share support and build confidence, including Xavia herself.
- This morphed into a project called ***Take My Song and Run with It***
- Xavia is now coordinating ***She Sings*** - curated women's events which showcase a diverse range of women in music.
- To date Xavia has largely achieved this without dedicated funding

#### **TRACEY BUNN (Darwin)**

- ***Lunch on the Lawns*** & other events where artists can perform
- ***Arafura Pearl Festival*** - wants this to grow from predominantly music to a broader women's festival
- starting a record Label - network, broker consultations with venues and other players
- show who is out there and what is possible, share and pool experiences
- songwriting
- being performance ready
- recording

#### **CAITI BAKER (Darwin)**

- ***Settle Down Sisters*** - recording label
- Provides music development workshops
- AIR mentor in the newly announced national women's program

#### **SHELLIE MORRIS:**

- enormous amount of workshops across the NT & interstate over 20+ years
- Mentoring across MusicNT Indigenous women's program and other initiatives
- role model for both First Nations and Women
- ambassador
- MusicNT Indigenous Women's Music Program (IWMP) Reference Group member

#### **NT FEMALE IDENTIFYING ARTS WORKERS IN MUSIC**

**LEAH FLANAGAN (Darwin)** - APRA AMCOS - Manager, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music Office

- Support for Indigenous women in music through her role.
- Also draws attention to and gaining recognition for remote artists
- Separate to her paid role, is a recognised & established Australian singer/songwriter

**JESSIE GRAINER (Alice Springs)** – MusicNT Indigenous Music Development Officer

- Provides support for Indigenous artists
- coordinates MusicNTs IWMP
- Regularly participates in jams and open mic events and encourages other Indigenous women to join in
- Separate to her paid role, is an emerging NT singer/songwriter

**LIZ ARCHER (Alice Springs) – MusicNT Central Australian Manager**

- Provides artist support for local musicians
- Manages MusicNTs IWMP, the Central Oz office, and our specific initiatives for women including advocating for this plan to be developed and then, with full support from MusicNT, doing it
- Separate to her paid role, has started up an NT womxn’s music show called “The Sheilas Show” on community radio 8CCC

**SHAUNA UPTON (Darwin) – MusicNT Safe Venues Project Officer**

- Manages a new project aimed at making NT venues safer places for punters (especially marginalised groups including women) and venue staff
- Avid supporter of live and local music and has her finger on the pulse of the Darwin music scene

**TEGHAN HUGHES (Darwin) – Manager, Happy Yess; TEABBA**

- features a diverse line up of artists including women and Indigenous
- provides regular “all ages” events & support for younger artists
- is a skilled sound technician, including experience working in remote locations
- works with and broadcasts a weekly show on TEABBA community radio featuring plenty of NT, female and Indigenous artists

**MEN SUPPORTING AND SEEKING OUT COLLABORATIONS WITH WOMEN**

***“Whilst there is a high level of collaboration between women and which women seek out with men, it’s just not spreading further and it needs to”.***

A number of respondents mentioned that women are far more likely to seek out collaborations with men than men are with women. ***“how do we engage men as advocates,” “we need champions – males who can promote change and be out there advocating for other males to change.”***

Women clearly value input from other women and from men but are less sure about the extent to which men value input from women. ***“These discussions and consultations are for EVERYONE, not just women. It would be great to develop more of a shared culture. We can do some things as women but we need the support of the broader music community.”***

It’s recommended that discussions around the benefits of diversity in industry & ways to encourage this, including garnering more support from males, be linked with those around the introduction of quotas (see Participation).

<b>AIMS</b>	<b>STRATEGIES</b>
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Continued collaboration between women – provided with more support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● promote and celebrate women’s collaborative efforts</li> <li>● provide structured, negotiated support (\$\$ &amp; in kind) for specific community driven initiatives which support women’s development (e.g. Xavia Nou – She Sings, Tracey Bunn – Arafura Pearl Festival)?? (need to develop criteria &amp; have budget for this)</li> <li>● advocacy with funding bodies promoting the benefits of collaborative efforts by women and encouraging greater financial support for initiatives supporting this</li> <li>● Support for regional women’s hubs - provide support posses for open mic, start up local events, etc</li> </ul>
Opportunities for women to collaborate with men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Build in workshops encouraging or modelling this as part of conference, song writing sessions, etc</li> <li>● Promote positive stories/outcomes from gender diverse collaborations</li> <li>● ongoing discussion for how to incentivise this</li> </ul>

## SIX: EXPOSURE, TOURING and PROMOTIONS

### GETTING MUSIC BY NT WOMEN “OUT THERE” AND BEING HEARD

***There’s so much talent across the NT yet so little coverage of our music – it’s really hard to get it out.***

Many respondents commented on the difficulty in getting NT music heard and “out there.” Once again, this is an issue which affects ALL NT artists but arguably women are further disadvantaged, especially given that female acts are rarely booked as headlines, concern about the lack of NT women’s music on radio, and the greater financial costs which women often face when gigging or touring. There is clearly no lack of talent across the NT, including from our female artists.

***“even in Darwin where we have some artists who are nationally and in cases internationally recognised, they can still be disadvantaged. We don’t have the options performers based in Melbourne or Sydney have. The costs are huge, especially if you have a family. Grants don’t factor in extra costs for women touring.***

During MusicNTs 2020 online workshop series the issue of geographical isolation and living in small communities was raised. The massive positive of living in a small community is that people tend to share and to collaborate more. The negatives are that there are limited opportunities and there is definitely a ceiling on those available, even in Darwin or Alice Springs. NT artists, especially emerging acts, need to tour (when COVID possible) yet this is expensive and has additional barriers for many women.

***Touring nationally is a critical step from emerging to becoming professional and gaining a national profile. It brings great experience in working with new and big venues, having different support acts, top notch audio engineers and so on. ArtsNT seems to support projects happening in the NT***

***and employing NT artists and arts workers here - this works to build up programs or projects but does not support touring.***

An interstate commentator mentioned that the Alice Springs live music scene ***is really held back by its lack of a great band rooms and live music venues where interstate acts can come and strengthen connections between Alice and the rest of Australia.*** This is true of many of our smaller towns and communities and has implications generally across industry.

One respondent commented that ***The Music Touring Program delivered 50% of its tour to developing female artists over the five year period it existed in <a>Partnership <between> Artback NT & MusicNT. It also enabled women with kids to tour including providing separate transport to current breastfeeding mother. <It> planned tours suitable for established experienced artists and those less so.*** Clearly there is a need for more programs like this.

One Tour this program supported in 2018 enabled 4 of MusicNTs Divas alumni to tour the Territory with support from two highly experienced female/nb event managers and sound engineers, including performances at a range of remote community festivals and the Railway Club in Darwin, and workshops for women and girls in a number of locations. One of the touring artists was breastfeeding and Artback NT and MusicNT accommodated her bringing her baby with her. Another required dialysis every two days which was also built into the schedule. Having organisations prepared to work in partnership and to accommodate the reality of female and Indigenous artists lives is critical.

#### **CULTIVATING SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S MUSIC WITHIN THE NT**

There were more questions than answers around how to cultivate greater support for women's music WITHIN the NT. As one participant put it, ***when you look at the overall "branding" for NT music and if Territory Sounds (Top 40 Countdown) or FreshMiNT playlists are anything to go by its playful, Darwin/Top End heavy, "blokey" – we know our musicians are far more diverse than this.***

Another commented ***"How do we create the strong following that bands have (especially in/from remote communities) for other genres of music?"***

The issue of "growing audiences," especially for music created by women, needs to be investigated further and included in our Live Music Strategy.

#### **MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF & BY WOMEN IN MUSIC**

One group were concerned that young women are not receiving training or mentoring in how to use social media, especially around digital safety. MusicNT is also aware of high levels of cyberbullying between young people, including in remote locations. It's recommended to follow up and see if this is taught in schools or through youth or mental health services.

***We need to get back to supporting and valuing the music not the age, commercial viability, look, gender of the artist or group.***

Caiti Baker's observation mentioned earlier around getting more likes for a "sexy photo" than for her music are highly relevant and demonstrate how far we have yet to go before we have gender equity in the music industry. As another participant noted, Lady Gaga became an overnight success when she performed naked. A number of respondents commented on the need to promote valuing music without appeasing industry groups this way and the push back from artists like Tones and I and G Flip.

**Girls need to think through the brand they are building up**, distinguish between their personal and their artist pages and manage both. Part of this is understanding what can be done through photoshopping and how images can be sexualised in unintended ways and how girls are being bullied and harassed through this.

AIMS	STRATEGIES
More music by women is heard more widely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ongoing discussion about how to create this – include in sector discussions, panels, workshops</li> <li>● Regularly highlight and feature women’s achievements in music through MNT social media</li> <li>● Encourage women to contribute to collections like FreshMiNT &amp; submit recorded music to AMRAP</li> <li>● Launch Strategy on IWD 2021 across 4 regions and include live music by women, make this an annual event including reviews on where things are at</li> <li>● Write a women in music strategy song – competition?</li> </ul>
More support for women to tour either intrastate or interstate... and beyond	<p>set up a touring infrastructure that can be shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● tour bus with gear if needed</li> <li>● get a stage bus or know how to find one</li> <li>● tour with compatible bands/acts</li> <li>● appropriate timing</li> <li>● trained crew to support with all this</li> </ul> <p>Advocacy for additional funding for touring mothers to compensate for additional costs (principal carers?)</p> <p>continue brokering linkages between international, interstate, regional and local artists</p>
Better media landscape/ women and girls know how to use social media and control their “brand”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● workshops on using social media for young women and emerging artists</li> <li>● advocacy with Dept Ed around this being included in curricula</li> <li>● advocacy with youth groups and employment providers to include this in “life skills” type programs</li> </ul>

## **SEVEN: BUILDING AN EVIDENCE BASE THAT CAN BE MEASURED AND MONITORED**

The clear majority of group participants are well pleased that MusicNT has embarked on these consultations. Concern was expressed that it be followed up with action.

Many participants saw the need for investment in a longer term plan including more extensive and direct consultation with remote Indigenous, non-binary and LGBTQI+ communities and with local

government. The need for a robust evaluation system & regular monitoring of this was also identified. MusicNT will investigate funding for this.

As part of this it is recommended that MusicNT **do an audit of our activities against gender equity** markers. This would include strategies, workshops, programs, major events, our website and promotions. It was also recommended we develop a template for this and advocate for this to be taken up by other related industry bodies, organisations and businesses.

**Peaks need to be brave enough to literally shift where the resources go and what they support.** The reality is that, even pre-COVID, arts and development funding is limited, with demand outstripping the resources available and that this is unlikely to change in the near future at either Territory or Federal levels. It was also observed that sometimes the funding buckets that are available don't match the musical activities particular groups want to create, the most common example of this being support for Indigenous gospel singing and choirs which many (mainly) older women are keen for but which generally does not include the creation or publishing of new works. One respondent who has worked closely over many years with a community commented **"as an example, APRA funding has emphasis on song writing and new musical works, yet sometimes the women want to prioritise inclusive music for everyone. <we need> a broader, more holistic eligibility criteria.**

MusicNT's Chairperson, Claire Kilgariff noted that our organisation is about to enact a new Strategic Plan and we are moving to multiple year operational funding from both NT and Federal avenues. This gives us greater capacity for longer term planning and for building more of the supports that are clearly still required for disadvantaged groups within our industry.

A participant stated that **resources need to go to those who need them rather than expecting people to find them and go to the resources** and another stated that **primarily using social media as a major promotions platform is too limited**, especially when trying to reach remote communities. Whilst we do have strong engagement with remote communities through this medium, MusicNT could investigate strengthening linkages with LGANT, individual regional councils and the extent to which we link directly with emerging and established Indigenous artists from remote locations.

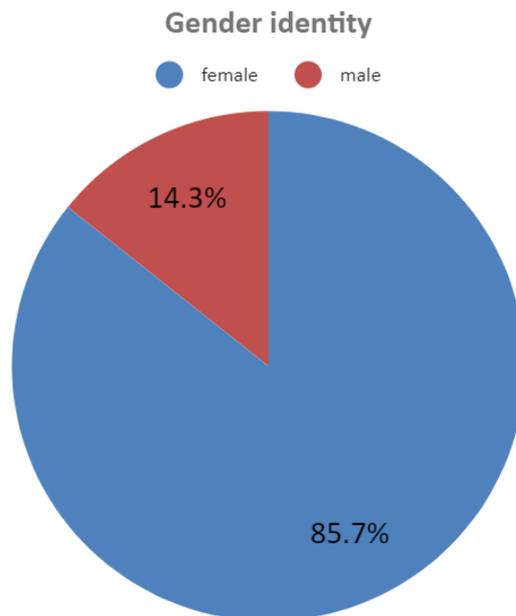
AIMS	STRATEGIES
Develop an evaluation system for key components - Know what the different demands and barriers are for particular groups of women – eg Mums & bubs, First Nations, LGBTQIA+, remote, older girls, seniors... so we can respond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● develop &amp; implement a robust evaluation process for this strategy</li> <li>● continued and extended consultations including specific groups within women's and nb communities to determine specific strengths, gaps and required strategies.</li> </ul>
Ensure factors impacting on women/women's perspectives are included in all investigations, surveys, ongoing work on live music strategy or similar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● integration of gender equity and awareness throughout everything MusicNT does (see earlier also)</li> <li>● promotion of gender equity strategies and awareness campaign more broadly across industry and modified to be inclusive of different groups (eg First Nations, LGBTQI++, older women)</li> </ul>
funding criteria reflects additional expenses for women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advocacy for additional funding for touring mothers to compensate for additional costs (principal carers?)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Advocacy for all arts funding bodies to include additional expenses for women as approved budget costs. Plus awareness around seeing this as increasing diversity and opportunities rather than as a deficit in ppls applications.</li></ul>
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## APPENDICES

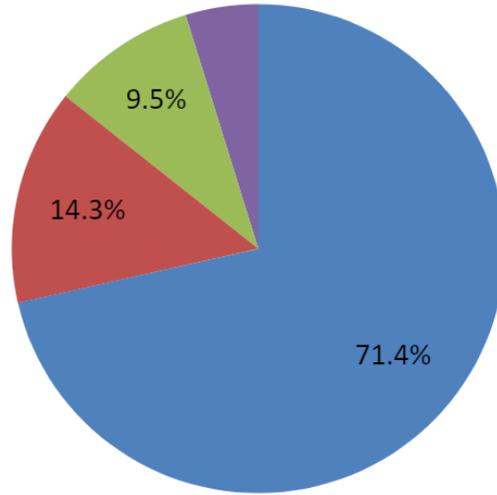
- Demographic & multiple choice info and tables from survey
- **List of those who came to group sessions???**
- **Complete combined transcript including all comments received and expressed in participants' own words, some names of individuals or organisations deleted???**
- **Copy of the draft IWMP Strat Directions paper???**
- Links to Live Music Strategy (if this is finalised/available) and more info around Venue Safety Project.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS – **some of this info still needs to be integrated within the body of the report,**



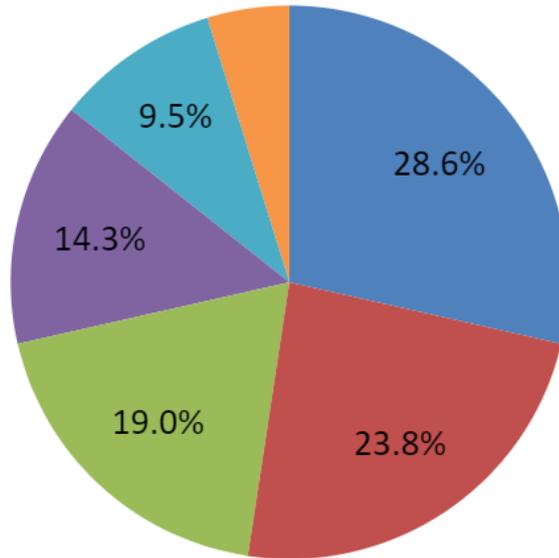
### cultural identity

● non-Indigenous ● born overseas ● Indigenous ● CALD

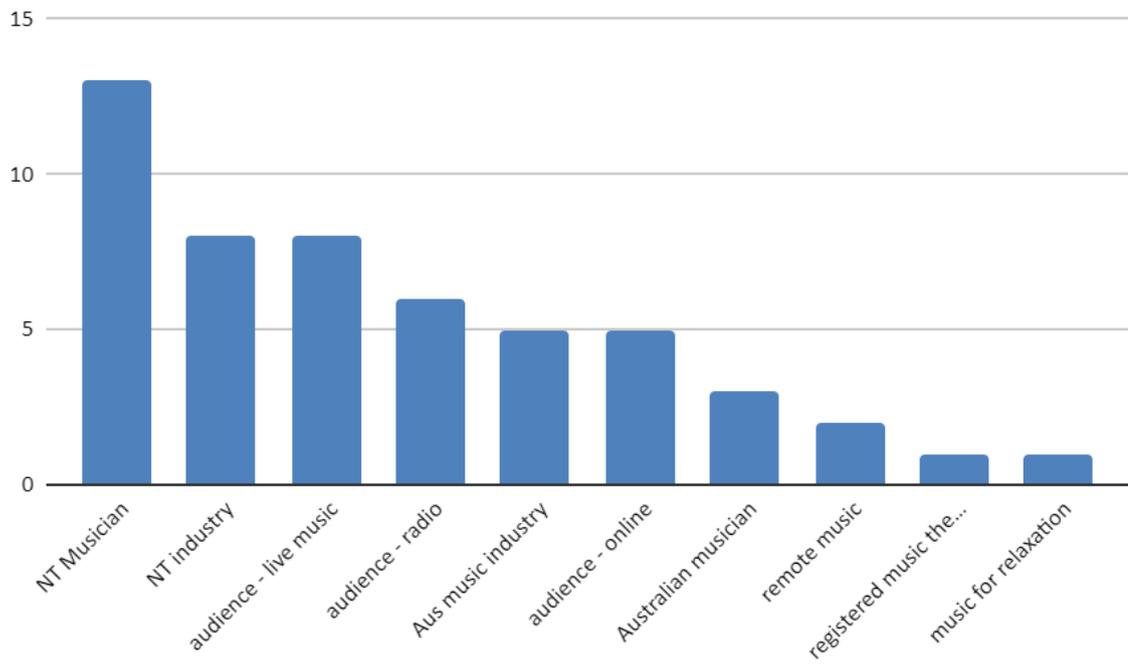


### Geographical location

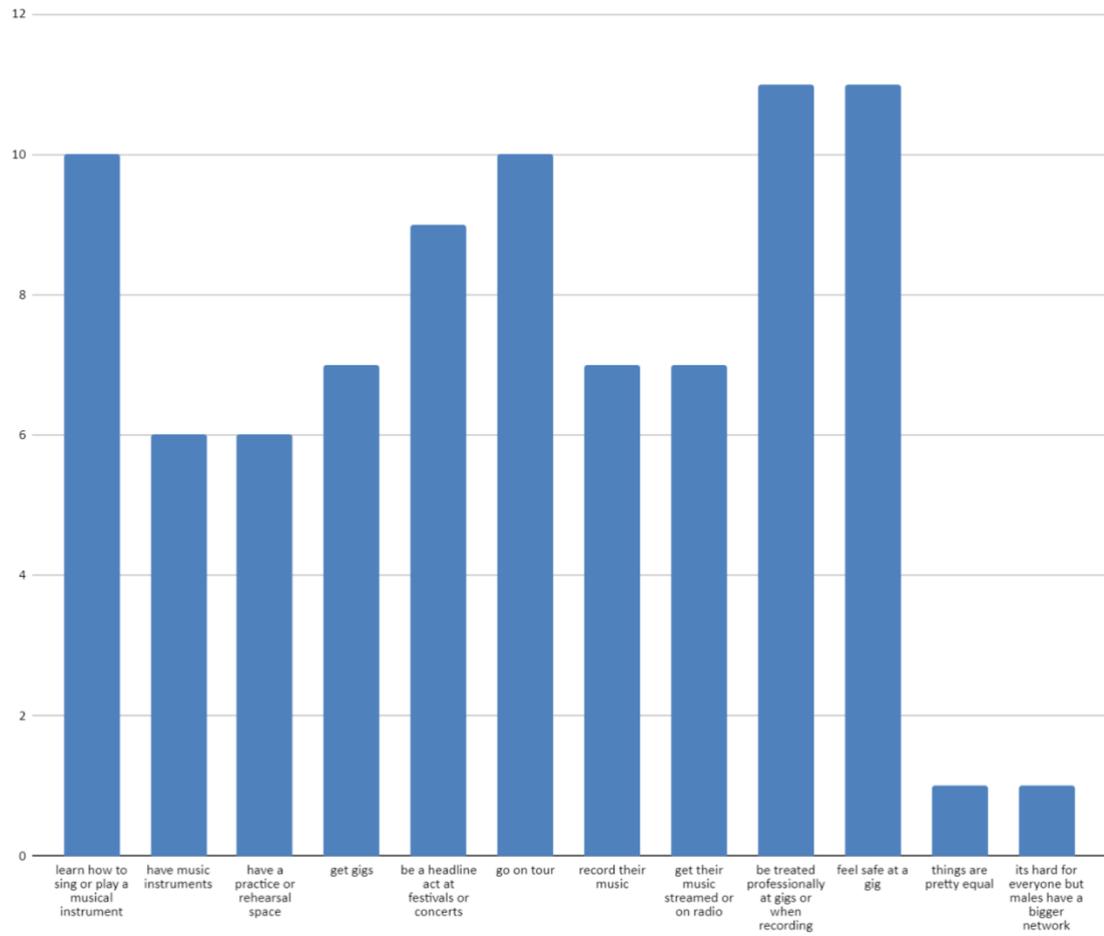
● Alice Springs ● Darwin ● Interstate ● Outer Darwin ● Katherine  
● MacDonnell



## LINKS WITH NT MUSIC SCENE



## What's more difficult for women and girls?



## DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF GENDER BASED DISCRIMINATION

