

Request for Tender (RFT)

Raising Our Voices - A First Nations–Led Review into Cultural Safety and Representation in the Contemporary Music Industry

Issued by: Support Act Ltd

Funding Partner: Sound NSW

Additional Support: Creative Workplaces, Creative Victoria, Music Australia, The Tony Foundation

Date issued: Monday 30 March, 2026

Closing date for submissions: 4 pm, Monday 20 April 2026

Contact for enquiries: Catherine Satour, First Nations Program Manager

Submissions to: FNMIR@supportact.org.au

1. Background

Support Act is a registered charity that provides crisis relief, mental health and workplace support for people working in music and the creative industries.

In 2022, the *Raising Their Voices* report identified systemic inequities and harm experienced by workers in the contemporary music industry, and recommended a dedicated, First Nations–led review to explore issues of cultural safety, representation and participation (Recommendation 12).

Raising Our Voices will engage First Nations music workers across metropolitan, regional and remote Australia and will produce practical recommendations to strengthen cultural safety, representation, and leadership pathways in contemporary music.

The Review forms part of the sector’s broader response to the *Raising Their Voices* recommendations, alongside other initiatives such as the development of the new Music Code, led by Creative Workplaces, to support safer and more respectful workplaces across the music sector.

The first phase of the research program is funded by the NSW Government through Sound NSW. Funding will support First Nations-led and co-designed research with First Nations music workers and will engage organisations across NSW, including Western Sydney, the South Coast, Northern Rivers and regional communities.

The second phase will include other states and territories, enabled by additional funding from Creative Workplaces, Creative Victoria, Music Australia, The Tony Foundation, and the funders of the 2022 *Raising Their Voices* report.

The research project will be led by Support Act’s First Nations Program Manager, **Catherine Satour**, supported by a First Nations Steering Committee that will provide cultural governance, strategic guidance and music industry expertise.

Nationally respected organisational culture and integrity expert **Alex Shehadie**, author of the 2022 *Raising Their Voices* report, will support the Review to ensure continuity with the original recommendations and reform framework.

Support Act now seeks to appoint a suitably qualified consultancy to coordinate and deliver this research project.

1A. Guiding Principles

This Review will be underpinned by the following principles:

- First Nations leadership and cultural governance
- Cultural safety and trauma-informed practice
- Respect for community voice and lived experience
- Transparency and accountability
- Independence and integrity
- Commitment to practical, sector-wide change

Proponents must demonstrate how these principles will be embedded across all phases of the research design, consultation process, analysis and reporting.

2. Purpose of this RFT

Support Act invites suitably qualified consultancies to submit a proposal to design, manage and deliver the *Raising Our Voices* research project under the guidance of Catherine Satour, First Nations Program Manager, with support from the First Nations Steering Committee.

The appointed consultancy will:

- Design and implement an appropriate research framework
- Coordinate national consultations
- Analyse findings
- Produce a final report with practical and actionable recommendations to strengthen cultural safety, representation and leadership pathways in the Australian contemporary music industry

Preference will be given to First Nations–owned or led consultancies, or those demonstrating genuine and embedded partnerships with First Nations researchers and communities.

3. Scope of Work

The appointed consultancy will:

- Work with Support Act and the Steering Committee to finalise the research framework, ethical protocols and project timeline
- Ensure trauma-informed and culturally safe practices throughout all phases
- Identify and proactively address barriers to participation, including geographic, cultural, economic, accessibility and trust-based barriers
- Develop and implement culturally appropriate participant safeguarding protocols, including referral pathways for distress support
- Establish clear governance, reporting and communication processes aligned with the Steering Committee
- Conduct qualitative and quantitative research with First Nations music workers and organisations across NSW (including Western Sydney, South Coast, Northern Rivers,

Central Coast and regional communities), and in Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania

- Facilitate yarning circles, interviews, focus groups, surveys and written submissions (in-person and/or online as appropriate)
- Integrate relevant sector data where appropriate
- Engage key music industry stakeholders (labels, venues, festivals, promoters and peak bodies)
- Synthesise findings into clear recommendations and practical tools
- Prepare a comprehensive final report
- Participate in a NSW-based national symposium in early 2027

4. Deliverables

The consultancy will provide:

- Inception Report and agreed Research Plan by 31 May 2026
- Draft and final research instruments
- Mid-project Progress Report - 30 September 2026
- Final Research Report (by December 2026), including:
 - Executive Summary
 - Methodology
 - Thematic findings and analysis
 - Key issues and sector trends
 - Practical and actionable recommendations
 - Implementation considerations and risks
 - Opportunities for sector leadership and reform
- Presentation materials and participation in final symposium (Q1 2027)

Up to two drafts of the final report may be required prior to acceptance.

5. Required Expertise

Proponents must demonstrate:

- Proven experience in First Nations–led research, cultural consultation and/or community engagement
- Demonstrated understanding of trauma-informed and culturally safe methodologies
- Experience conducting social research or evaluation within arts, cultural or community sectors
- Strong multi-stakeholder project management capability
- Excellent analytical and written communication skills
- Capacity to deliver within agreed timeframes and budget

6. Submission Requirements

Submissions must include:

1. **Cover Letter** – outlining interest in the project and relevant experience.
2. **Methodology and Approach** – detailed description of the proposed research design, consultation methodology and engagement processes.
3. **Team Composition** – names, roles and short bios of key personnel, clearly identifying First Nations team members or collaborators.
4. **Cultural Competence Statement** – outlining demonstrated experience and approach to culturally safe, trauma-informed research practice.
5. **Inclusion and Participation Strategy** – describing how marginalised and diverse First Nations voices will be meaningfully engaged and supported throughout the consultation process.
6. **Governance and Reporting Approach** – outlining proposed communication processes, reporting structures and interface with the First Nations Steering Committee.
7. **Data Management and Safeguarding Protocols** – including participant care, consent processes, confidentiality measures and secure data handling practices.
8. **Risk Management Plan** – identifying key cultural, operational, reputational, legal and data security risks, and proposed mitigation strategies.
9. **Project Plan and Timeline** – including key milestones and deliverables aligned to the timeframe outlined in this RFT.
10. **Budget and Fee Proposal** – a detailed, itemised budget aligned to the Scope of Work and proposed methodology, clearly identifying:
 - Professional fees (including hourly or daily rates where applicable)
 - Travel and accommodation costs
 - Consultation delivery costs
 - Data management or technical costs
 - Administration and project management costs
 - GST (clearly identified)

Proponents must include a fully deliverable baseline proposal addressing the complete Scope of Work.

Where appropriate, proponents may also include clearly costed alternative or enhanced delivery options (for example, expanded engagement activities or additional outputs), provided these are presented separately and do not replace the required baseline proposal.

All assumptions underpinning the proposed budget must be clearly stated.

11. **Evidence of Professional Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance.**
12. **Corporate Details** – including ABN and registered business address.
13. **Conflict of Interest Declaration.**
14. **Two Referees** – recent referees for comparable work.
15. **Examples of Previous Work** – relevant research reports or consultation outputs.

7. Assessment Criteria

Criterion	Weighting
Demonstrated experience in First Nations-led or culturally safe research	30%
Methodology and alignment with project goals	25%
Skills and experience of proposed team	20%
Value for money and realistic budget	15%
Capacity to deliver within required timeframe	10%

8. Timeline

Activity	Date
RFT issued	30 March
Tender submissions close	20 April

Assessment and shortlisting	28 April
Interviews with shortlisted consultancies	4 May
Appointment and contracting	11 May
Project commencement	18 May 2026

Late submissions may not be considered.

9. Lodgement Details

Submissions must be emailed in PDF format to:

FNMIR@supportact.org.au

Subject line: *Tender Submission – Raising Our Voices*

10. Intellectual Property and Confidentiality

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, final project outputs and reports produced under this engagement will become the property of Support Act.

Intellectual property in pre-existing materials remains with the consultant.

Applicants should clearly identify any information in their submission that they consider confidential and provide reasons. Support Act will use reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality but reserves the right to disclose information if required by law or funding obligations.

11. Conditions of Tender

This Request for Tender does not constitute a contract between Support Act and any respondent.

Support Act reserves the right to:

- Amend, suspend or cancel the tender process
- Seek clarification from any respondent
- Shortlist applicants
- Negotiate with one or more respondents
- Decline to accept any submission
- Conduct appropriate reference, financial or probity checks

Support Act is not bound to accept the lowest priced or any submission.

Applicants are responsible for all costs associated with preparing and submitting a response.