

Media Release

The Hon Colin Brooks MP
Minister for Development Victoria
Minister for Precincts
Minister for Creative Industries



Monday, 3 June 2024

FROM VICTORIA TO NASHVILLE FOR THE LOVE OF COUNTRY MUSIC

Five Victorian songwriters are heading to the global capital of country music to further their careers, thanks to a professional development program backed by the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks today announced the artists who have been selected for the Melbourne to Nashville SongHubs program where they will get to work with acclaimed country artists and producers and build connections with career-breaking industry leaders in the world's biggest country music market.

The selected artists are ARIA and CMAA Golden Guitar Award winner Andrew Swift, Gumbayngirr/Bundjalung indie pop artist Jem Cassar-Daley, APRA Songwriter of the Year Ella Hooper, emerging Warrnambool-based singer-songwriter Michael Honan and soul/pop/folk artist Benny Morrell.

The five artists were among 12 who participated in a SongHubs songwriting camp at the Mornington Peninsula in March this year – led by Australian-born Nashville-based country hit-maker Lindsay Rimes.

At the end of the program, Rimes hand-picked the five standout artists who will take their talents to Nashville from 3-5 June during the world's biggest country music festival CMA Fest.

The international market for country music is growing and Victorian musicians are poised to take on the world. The latest Country Music Association of Australia Census found that five of the top 10 postcodes for country music songwriters were in Melbourne's northern suburbs.

Recent Spotify data reports that Australia has the third-largest country music market in the world after the US and Canada and is the world's fastest-growing country music market.

The Melbourne to Nashville SongHubs program is run by APRA AMCOS and supported through the Labor Government's Music Works program.

Music Works will continue to back Victorian artists and music industry workers, with \$1 million in the *Victorian Budget 2024/25*.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks

"The global market for country music is huge and growing and the Allan Labor Government is proud to back our home-grown artists to propel their careers on the world stage."

"Victoria leads the country in nurturing our talented musicians and performers – and we're continuing to back our musicians to take their career to the next level with a \$1 million boost to our Music Works program."

Quotes attributable to APRA AMCOS CEO Dean Ormston

"Congratulations to the five songwriters heading to Nashville for this one-of-a-kind-opportunity. The Australian connection to Nashville is a special one and we are grateful to Lindsay Rimes for curating SongHubs and drawing upon his network for the Nashville sessions."

"The potential here is huge and would like to thank the Victorian Government for their support in making this ambitious SongHubs happen."

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