

## AIR BACKGROUND

The Australian Independent Record Labels Association (AIR) was founded 1996 and is based in Melbourne. It is a national, non-government, non-profit trade body that promotes and represents the interests and development of Australian independent artists, labels and distributors via:-

- Advocacy and research of the Australian Independent music sector
- Collective Bargaining for the benefit of our members. AIR has successfully negotiated collective bargaining arrangements with MTV & Foxtel that has enabled our members to be paid for their video content which was otherwise being exploited without remuneration by broadcasters. AIR has also developed a relationship with Nightlife so that our members could gain an additional source of revenue.
- Export Development and liaison with international trade associations and bodies to promote the global interests of our members and the Australian Independent music sector. AIR has attended international trade fairs with Australian label business Delegates (including **Indie week** – New York, **Midem** - France, **Music Matters** – Singapore) to promote export business opportunities
- Promoting b2b opportunities via our Friends of AIR program
- Networking opportunities and events for our members to meet industry service providers, gain insights and knowledge
- Production of the Weekly Independent Music charts
- Weekly newsletter to members and subscribers
- Professional development. AIR has hosted a number of conferences, presentations and workshops for their members and has participated in panels and international and domestic trade events
- Production of the AIR Awards and Indie-Con Australian Conference

AIR members are Australian artists, labels and distributors across the full spectrum of music genres, ranging from small sole traders to some of the biggest independent operations in the country

AIR is an incorporated association limited by guarantee and is audited annually

### The board comprises of:

David Vodicka – Chairman

Matthew Rogers – Secretary

Basil Cook – Treasurer

Philip Mortlock

Andrew Stone

Ashley Gay

Tim Whincop

Alexander Franco

Katie Besgrove

Lorrae McKenna

### AIR is staffed by

Maria Amato – General Manager/CFO

Stuart Watters – Advocacy and Industry Consultant

Kelly Miller – Membership Officer and Administrative Assistant

Monica Drewe – Newsletter and Charts Coordinator

### THE AIR AWARDS

AIR's promotion of Australian independent music is most significant by way of AIR's annual Independent Music Awards. Conceived and produced by AIR, the Awards celebrated their 12th year in 2018. The Awards have developed into the key event for Australia's independent music community, having showcased and paid tribute to hundreds of Independent artists and labels. Press for the Awards reaches over 5 Million Australians per year and significant attention is received from international music press. Over 100 individual Awards have been presented across 12 years, and for many winners it has been the first real industry recognition they have received and in many cases has served to help springboard to national and international attention, recognition & success.

AIR is particularly proud to note that Award winners such as Chet Faker, Vance Joy & Courtney Barnett, all of whom have been nurtured and developed within our independent community, received their first significant recognition via AIR's Charts and Awards.

Over 12 years of Awards, there have many highlights. Here are just a few:

- Winners at the inaugural 2006 Awards included Hilltop Hoods & Gotye (who also performed with his band The Basics)
- Gurrumul's emergence, winning 3 Awards in 2008 & further Awards in 2011 and 2014
- Introduction of the Best Label Award in 2012, with inaugural winners Elefant Traks leading the way for subsequent winners Future Classic, I Oh You & Milk! Records
- Introduction the Best Classical Award in 2013
- 2007 and 2010 Award winner John Butler's stunning solo acoustic performance at the 10th Awards in 2015 of 'Better Than', the lead single from 2007 Best Independent Album Awardwinning 'Grand National'
- Courtney Barnett's amazing achievement of winning 3 Awards at the 2015 Awards, adding to her 2 Awards from 2014
- A.B. Original took out an amazing 5 awards at the 12<sup>th</sup> AIR Award held in Adelaide
- 2018 saw Skinnyfish Music take out AIR's brand new Outstanding Achievement Award receiving a \$5,000 cash prize from global independent rights agency Merlin, in recognition of their significant and lasting contribution to the Australian Independent Music Community.

The Awards have evolved from a small gathering of people at the inaugural Awards in 2006 to become a key event on the Australian music calendar, now hosting over 700 guests as an industry only event delivering performances from some of Australia's finest acts. AIR is looking to continue to evolve and develop the Awards and invest in continually improving the overall quality of the production.

The AIR Awards event features 13 "Best Independent" Awards categories:

Artist  
Album  
Single or EP  
Breakthrough Artist  
Label  
Blues & Roots Album  
Classical Album  
Country Album  
Dance, Electronica or Club Single  
Dance / Electronica Album  
Hard Rock, Heavy or Punk Album  
Hip Hop Album  
Jazz Album

The Awards categories are presented throughout the event, interspersed with live performances. In programming the performers, AIR looks to shine a light on exciting new, up and coming independent acts, as well as acts that have experienced both recent and long term success. The live element of the event aims to excite (through new and up and coming acts), inspire (through successful acts) and entertain (all performances). In the past ten years, AIR has showcased performances from the following artists:

### **INDIE-CON AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE**

Founded in 2017, Indie-Con Australia is a 2-day conference that enables participants to gain insights into the latest innovations and technological advancements in products, services and strategies available to the independent music sector, as well as providing an opportunity for the advancement of professional development, leadership and business performance skills.

The Indie-Con brand has been developed by the Association of Independent Music (AIM), AIR's UK sister association and is an un-paralleled event that addresses issues that impact on the breadth and diversity of the independent music community.

In 2017, AIR provided the first conference of its type in Australia and was attended by over 200 people from all over Australia as well as special international guests. The 2018 Indie-Con Australia conference included numerous panels, keynote speeches, presentations, focus groups and workshops, all of which tackled important issues in today's Independent music sector.

There were over 60 speakers that ranged from artists, artist managers, label managers, music publishers, rights collections society representatives and academics, each sharing their insights with the crowd. Some of the topics discussed included, neighbouring rights, safe harbour, streaming, social change in the music industry, data trends, equality, artist management and artist-run labels, publishing, marketing, social media and digital content, Merlin, Songtrust, Spotify and Bolster. These topics were carefully curated to enhance, professional development, competitiveness and sustainability within the industry. The panellists included 10 international guests that provided attendees with valuable insights into current global market positions, trends and challenges.