

40
ARIA
AWARDS 2026



**CONDITIONS OF ENTRY
AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

2026

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1. ARIA AWARDS CATEGORIES

(A) CATEGORIES FOR WHICH ELIGIBLE ENTRIES ARE ACCEPTED

(a) ARIA Awards

ARIA will accept eligible entries from ARIA members only in the following categories:

Category	ARIA Award Type	Voted/Judged By
Album of the Year	General	Voting Academy
Michael Gudinski Breakthrough Artist	General	Voting Academy
Best Solo Artist	General	Voting Academy
Best Group	General	Voting Academy
Best Independent Release	General	Judging School
Best Adult Contemporary Album	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Blues & Roots Album	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Children's Album	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Country Album	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Dance / Electronic Release	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Pop Release	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Rock Album	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Hard Rock / Heavy Metal Album	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Hip Hop / Rap Release	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Soul / R&B Release	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Alternative Release	Genre Award	Judging School
Best Australian Live Act	General	Public Vote
Best Video	General	Public Vote

(b) Fine Arts ARIA Awards

ARIA will accept eligible entries from ARIA members only in the following categories:

Category	Voted/Judged By
Best Classical Album	Judging School
Best Jazz Album	Judging School
Best World Music Album	Judging School

(c) Artisan ARIA Awards

ARIA will accept eligible entries from ARIA members only in the following categories:

Category	Voted/Judged By
Best Cover Art	Voting Academy
Engineer – Best Engineered Release	Judging School
Producer – Best Produced Release	Judging School

(d) Non-ARIA Member Eligibility for Specific ARIA Awards Categories

Generally, only ARIA Members are eligible to submit entries for the ARIA Awards. However, as approved by the ARIA Board from time to time, specific ARIA Award categories may be open to entries from non-ARIA Members (for example, Advertising Award and Best Music Festival Award), and winners of such categories may not be ARIA Members. Such categories will be clearly identified and communicated to ARIA Members and others, and eligibility for entry into such categories will be subject to separate criteria and conditions approved by the ARIA Board and published on the ARIA website.

(B) CATEGORIES FOR WHICH ENTRIES ARE NOT ACCEPTED

ARIA does not accept entries in the following categories as the entries and nominations for these categories are drawn from a range of different sources as specified below and as detailed further in this document:

Category	Nominations Determined by	Voted/Judged By
Song of the Year	Ten highest selling Singles based on ARIA Singles Chart	Public Vote
Most Popular International Artist	Ten highest selling international artists based on ARIA Albums Chart Data	Public Vote
ARIA Hall of Fame	ARIA Board	ARIA Board
ARIA Icon, ARIA Lifetime Achievement and other special achievement Awards	ARIA Board	ARIA Board

(C) WITHDRAWAL OF CATEGORIES

ARIA reserves the right to withdraw any Category in any one year if ARIA determines that there is an insufficient number of entries in that Category. ARIA may in its sole discretion place the affected entries in one or more other Categories.

2. CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- (a) All ARIA members are eligible to submit entries for the Awards in the categories specified in section 1(A) (a), (b) and (c) above.
- (b) ARIA members can submit up to eight entries in each individual category for which entries are accepted. Levy Members (Sony, Universal Music and Warner Music) may submit up to twelve entries in each category for which entries are accepted.
- (c) If a particular ARIA member's recordings are distributed by another party, it is the responsibility of that ARIA member to liaise with its distributor to confirm which eligible entity will be submitting the entry to ARIA.
- (d) All Recordings and materials submitted as part of an entry must be non-infringing and authorised materials. If ARIA is advised that any materials submitted as part of an entry are infringing or unauthorised, then ARIA will determine in its sole discretion the eligibility of such materials and the eligibility of the entry.
- (e) ARIA will require each ARIA member to submit certain collateral and assets (for example, RAP Sheets, cover art files, Apple or Spotify IDs, MP3s and YouTube links) as specified in the *Guide To Submitting Entries* which ARIA will make available to all ARIA members. The conditions set out in the *Guide To Submitting Entries* also form part of these Conditions of Entry.
- (f) Please note that, if an ARIA member incorrectly enters an artist or recording for any category, that ARIA member will be liable for any additional auditing costs incurred.
- (g) By submitting an entry, the ARIA member agrees that ARIA (and its licensees) may use the submitted collateral and assets in connection with the ARIA Awards voting platform, the ARIA Awards television/online programs and ARIA Awards promotions, activities and marketing without payment to the ARIA member, producer, the relevant artist or any other person.
- (h) Unless an ARIA member otherwise advises ARIA, the ARIA member also consents to the use of any audio recording that it submits to ARIA as a part of its entry being used as music on hold on the telephone systems of ARIA and PPCA.

- (i) As set out in section 5.5, any entries in the category of Best Independent Release must be accompanied by a confirmation form (in the format specified by ARIA, and appended to this document as Appendix B) which is signed by a Director, the Chief Executive Officer or the Chief Financial Officer of the ARIA member. If subsequently requested by ARIA, a properly executed and valid Statutory Declaration (in the format provided by ARIA, and appended to this document as Appendix A) for any entries in the category of Best Independent Release must be signed and returned to ARIA within two business days of any such request. ARIA will determine at its discretion whether the Statutory Declaration that accompanies each entry is valid.
- (j) All entries must be submitted via the designated ARIA online platform within the specified timeframe.
- (k) All ARIA members who submit an entry agree that the decision of ARIA regarding the eligibility of an entry is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- (l) All ARIA members who submit an entry and all ARIA Awards entrants agree to comply with the ARIA Code of Conduct and ARIA Behaviour Benchmark as published on the ARIA website from time to time. It is a condition of entry that all ARIA members that submit an entry must advise the relevant ARIA Awards entrant of the entrant's obligation to comply with the ARIA Code of Conduct and ARIA Behaviour Benchmark.
- (m) The person who submits the entry on behalf of each ARIA member acknowledges that they have read and accept the terms of this document. Any entry by an ARIA member constitutes acceptance of the terms of this document.

3. DETERMINATION OF THE AWARDS WINNERS AND RULINGS

3.1 VOTING AND AWARD DETERMINATIONS

All entries received by ARIA are first assessed to ensure that the relevant recordings are eligible for the particular Award category for which they have been entered. Once eligibility has been confirmed, all eligible entries received by ARIA are then presented for voting or determination as set out in Section 1 above and as set out below. Currently:

- (a) Six (6) awards categories are judged/voted by the Voting Academy which consists of over 800 representatives from every area of the music industry (**Voting Academy**).
- (b) Eighteen (18) awards categories are judged/voted by specialist Judging Schools which consist of representatives experienced with that genre of music (**Judging School**).
- (c) Four (4) awards categories are determined by Public Vote. These are:
 - (i) Song of the Year;
 - (ii) Most Popular International Artist;
 - (iii) Best Australian Live Act; and
 - (iv) Best Video.
- (d) The ARIA Hall of Fame, the ARIA Icon Award and Lifetime Achievement and other special achievement Awards are awarded at the discretion of the ARIA Board.

3.2 RULINGS

- (a) If any ARIA Awards entrant, nominee or winner (including to avoid doubt, an ARIA Hall of Fame inductee or a recipient of any special ARIA Award), or an ARIA member or person that submits an entry on behalf of an entrant, nominee or winner, engages in conduct:
 - (i) that brings ARIA or the ARIA Awards into disrepute;

- (ii) that is not in line with the ARIA Code of Conduct or the ARIA Behaviour Benchmark (as published on the ARIA website); or
- (iii) that is misleading, for example where the initial entry and/or the subsequent conferral of the ARIA Award was based on false or misleading information,

then the ARIA Board reserves the right at any time, in its absolute discretion, to take whatever measures it considers necessary to preserve the reputation and integrity of ARIA or the ARIA Awards and to uphold the principles set out in the ARIA Code of Conduct and the ARIA Behaviour Benchmark.

- (b) The measures referred to in section 3.2(a) above may include, but are in no way limited to:
 - (i) refusing or disqualifying an ARIA Awards entry or nomination at any stage;
 - (ii) revoking or withdrawing an ARIA Award that has already been conferred; or
 - (iii) refusing entry to the ARIA Awards event (or subsequent ARIA Awards events).
- (c) If an ARIA Award is revoked by the ARIA Board after it has been presented, it is at the ARIA Board's discretion as to whether an award is given in that category for that year. The ARIA Board may also, at its discretion, subsequently restore an ARIA Award that has been revoked or undertake any further measures that it deems appropriate.
- (d) The ARIA Board's decision in relation to all matters under section 3.2 is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

4. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligibility for the Awards is defined by ARIA as follows:

4.1 ENTRY

- (a) Only ARIA members are able to enter recordings/items for judging for the categories specified in section 1A (a), (b) and (c).
- (b) ARIA members may enter any artist / recording that satisfies the eligibility criteria set out in this document.
- (c) Recordings / Releases which have previously been nominated (in prior years) are ineligible.
- (d) An ARIA member can only enter its own artists (or those it distributes) and cannot enter the artists of another record label.
- (e) ARIA Levy Members may lodge up to twelve (12) entries in each category for which entries are accepted.
- (f) ARIA members may lodge up to eight (8) entries in each category for which entries are accepted.

4.2 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

- (a) **Album:** An Album is defined to be a release in physical and/or digital format which does not qualify as a Single and which satisfies other criteria particular to each category.
- (b) **ARIA Levy Members** (or **Levy Members**) means Sony Music Entertainment Australia Pty Ltd, Universal Music Australia Pty Limited and Warner Music Australia Pty Limited.
- (c) **Awards:** means the 2026 ARIA Awards which includes, to avoid doubt, the 2026 ARIA Fine Arts and Artisan Awards.
- (d) **Chart Eligibility Period:** means the relevant period during which ARIA published its charts, being the period commencing on 2 September 2025 and concluding on 31 August 2026 (inclusive).
- (e) **Credited Recording Artists:** Recording artists credited on the release must meet the Artist eligibility criteria (see Section below: **4.3 Artist Eligibility**) except in the case of Best Classical Album and Best Jazz Album – refer to those particular category definitions.
- (f) **Current Eligibility Period:** means the period commencing 23 August 2025 and concluding on 21 August 2026 inclusive.
- (g) **Eligibility of a Single:** In the case of singles, a single is deemed eligible if the official media servicing date or video servicing date (determined by the ‘published’ date listed on the label or artist’s YouTube channel) is within the Eligibility Period, where it is acknowledged that the track may have been previously available for individual digital purchase as part of an Album release outside of the Eligibility Period.
- (h) **Eligibility Period:** To be eligible for a nomination in the Awards (in any of the categories where an entry is required from ARIA members) the relevant item must have been released either:
 - (i) within the Current Eligibility Period; or
 - (ii) during the Previous Eligibility Period, provided that the item has not previously been entered in any ARIA Awards category.
- (i) **Judging School** means the persons described in Section 3.1(b).
- (j) **Multi-Artist Compilations:** Unless otherwise specified, multi-artist compilations are not eligible.
- (k) **Multi-discs:** Where the entered release comprises more than one disc, the discs must be sold as ‘one set’ to qualify.
- (l) **New Recordings:** New recordings, including new live recordings, of previously released compositions are eligible.
- (m) **Number of times a recording may be entered:** A recording may be entered in more than one non-genre category, but may not be entered in more than one genre category. Category definitions indicate those that are genre categories.
- (n) **Previous Eligibility Period:** means the two immediately preceding eligibility periods commencing 19 August 2023 and concluding on 22 August 2025. For the avoidance of doubt:
 - (i) the 2024 eligibility period spanned 19 August 2023 to 23 August 2024; and
 - (ii) the 2025 eligibility period spanned 24 August 2024 to 22 August 2025.
- (o) **Release Date:** Release date is defined as the date the product was first officially commercially released in physical or digital format in Australia through retail channels (which, for the purpose of clarity, may include online physical and digital retailers and/or the artist’s own website).

- (p) **Re-released Recordings:** Re-released recordings are not eligible. All entries must comprise at least 50% (by number of tracks) previously unreleased recordings. Note that, for this purpose, remixed tracks do not count as previously unreleased recordings and the inclusion of any previously released material will render the particular track ineligible.
- (q) **Single:** A Single is defined to be a product released in physical and/or digital format and which either:
- (i) contains up to five different songs, and with a music content of not more than 25 minutes duration; or
 - (ii) contains multiple versions of not more than five songs with a combined duration of not more than 40 minutes providing that the combined duration of the longest versions of each song does not exceed 25 minutes.

For the purposes of this definition, 'song' may include an instrumental only piece.

- (r) **Voting Academy** means the persons described in Section 3.1(a).

4.3 ARTIST ELIGIBILITY

- (a) Any artist that is a human and that satisfies any of the following criteria will be deemed to be eligible:
- (i) Any artist who is an Australian citizen;
 - (ii) Any artist who was born in Australia;
 - (iii) Any artist with permanent residency status and who has lived in Australia for at least six months per year for the two consecutive years ending on 21 August 2026;
 - (iv) Any artist who has applied for permanent residency and has lived in Australia for at least six months per year for two consecutive years ending on 21 August 2026 and is signed to an Australian record label; or
 - (v) Any New Zealand artist who has lived in Australia for at least six months per year for the two consecutive years ending on 21 August 2026 and is signed to an Australian record label.
- (b) In the case of groups or duos at least 50% of the members of the group must satisfy at least one of the above criteria. Each entry must be accompanied by a list of group members appearing on the release.
- (c) The ARIA Board reserves the right to exercise its discretion to grant eligibility in special circumstances where, for example, the artist in question has a strong historical and cultural connection with Australia.

4.4 INELIGIBILITY

All entries will be reviewed for eligibility by the Eligibility Sub-Committee of the ARIA Awards Committee, which reserves the right to make the final judgement on category, artist and product eligibility. The Eligibility Sub-Committee will provide notice citing reasons for any entries deemed ineligible. The nominating ARIA member will have two (2) business days from such notice to respond, at which time the Eligibility Sub-Committee will review the entry and make a final decision.

4.5 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ELIGIBILITY

- (a) **Human Authorship Requirement**

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- (i) Only human creators that meet the Artist Eligibility criteria set out in section 4.3 are eligible to be nominated and eligible to win an ARIA Award. The only exceptions to this rule are the categories of:
 - a. *Best Australian Live Act*, where the promoter (which may be a company or other entity) is eligible to receive the ARIA Award along with the Artist; and
 - b. *Best Use of an Australian Recording in an Advertisement* (if awarded) where an Eligible Agency along with the Artist may be nominated and awarded the ARIA Award; and
 - c. *Best Music Festival* (if awarded), where the promoter may be a company or other entity.
 - (ii) Recordings/items that have been submitted for entry to the ARIA Awards that do not contain any human authorship are ineligible for consideration in any ARIA Awards categories.

(b) Limited Use of AI Elements

Recordings/items that incorporate elements of Artificial Intelligence (AI) may be submitted for entry, but only if a human is the primary creator of such recording/item and the human contribution is substantial and meaningful. AI cannot be the sole or central element of any recording/item that is submitted for entry.

(c) Proof of Eligibility

- (i) Entrants must be able to provide proof upon request from ARIA to verify that a human is the primary creator of the recording/item that has been submitted for entry.
- (ii) For the Artisan Awards Categories the entrant must be able to provide sufficient evidence to ARIA that the technical work is the result of human effort.
- (iii) Final decisions regarding AI eligibility are at the discretion of ARIA and if necessary, the ARIA Board.

5. GENERAL CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

5.1 Album of the Year

- (a) Judged by the Voting Academy.
- (b) Only Album recordings are eligible.
- (c) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (d) The Album must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have appeared in:
 - (i) the ARIA Top 50 Albums Chart; or
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 20 Australian Artist Albums Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

5.2 Michael Gudinski Breakthrough Artist

- (a) Judged by the Voting Academy.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible, as are Album and Single recordings.
- (c) The recording must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have appeared in:
 - (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart;
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 100 Singles Chart;
 - (iii) the ARIA Top 50 Australian Artist Albums Chart; or
 - (iv) the ARIA Top 50 Australian Artist Singles Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.
- (d) Artists and groups are not eligible if they, or any member of the group:
 - (i) have previously been a nominee in any ARIA Awards category with an Album or Single; or
 - (ii) if they have been in a group that has previously been a nominee in any ARIA Awards category with an Album or Single; or
 - (iii) have had a previous Top 50 Album in the ARIA Albums Chart or Top 50 Single in the ARIA Singles Chart. A placing in an ARIA *genre* chart will not exclude artists from this category.
- (e) Note that a nomination for any of the Advertising ARIA Award categories **will not** preclude an artist or group from eligibility for this category.

5.3 Best Solo Artist

- (a) Judged by the Voting Academy. There will be 10 nominees in this category.
- (b) Album and Single recordings are eligible.

- (c) If the product packaging refers to an individual and a band, the ARIA member must nominate whether that act is to be deemed a solo or group act for the Awards. A nominee for Best Solo Artist cannot be nominated in the Best Group Category.
- (d) The recording must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have appeared in:
 - (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart;
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 100 Singles Chart,
 - (iii) the ARIA Top 20 Australian Artist Albums Chart; or
 - (iv) the ARIA Top 20 Australian Artist Singles Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

5.4 Best Group

- (a) Judged by the Voting Academy.
- (b) Album and Single recordings are eligible.
- (c) A group is comprised of two or more people. If the name on the product packaging is that of a band with no indication of any individual name, then such band will be considered in the Group category only. If the product packaging refers to an individual and a band, the ARIA member must nominate whether that act is to be deemed a group or a solo act for the Awards. A nominee for Best Solo Artist cannot be nominated in the Best Group Category.
- (d) The recording must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have appeared in:
 - (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart;
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 100 Singles Chart,
 - (iii) the ARIA Top 20 Australian Artist Albums Chart, or
 - (iv) the ARIA Top 20 Australian Artist Singles Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

5.5 Best Independent Release

- (a) Judged by a Judging School.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible, as are Album and Single recordings.
- (c) The nominated recording must be released by an 'Independent' ARIA member. For the purpose of this Award category, an ARIA member will be considered to be Independent if the ARIA member:
 - (i) or the nominated artist or group, funds its own A&R and marketing costs in respect of the nominated recording (a Levy Member may provide these funds, provided that these funds are not only recoupable but repayable), and undertakes its own local marketing and promotion (including media and DSP servicing) of the relevant release;
 - (ii) is not owned in whole or in part by any Levy Member or their respective affiliates or subsidiaries; and

- (iii) has not entered into an exclusive licence agreement with a Levy Member for Australia in respect of the nominated recording.
- (d) Each entry in this category will need to be accompanied by a confirmation form, in the format prescribed by ARIA (see Appendix B), signed by the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer or a Director of the nominating ARIA member confirming the above criteria has been met during the Current Eligibility Period. ARIA may subsequently request the execution by the ARIA member of a Statutory Declaration (in the format provided by ARIA and appended to this document as Appendix A). The Statutory Declaration must be physically (not electronically) signed by the Chief Financial Officer or Director of the nominating ARIA member and properly witnessed in accordance with the Statutory Declaration guidelines, and returned to ARIA within two business days of any such request from ARIA. ARIA will determine at its discretion whether the executed Statutory Declaration is valid.
- (e) The recording must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period.
- (f) For the purpose of eligibility in this category of Best Independent Release only, EMI Music Australia Pty Ltd will also be considered to be a Levy Member.

5.6 Best Adult Contemporary Album

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (c) Only Album recordings are eligible.
- (d) The Album must be directed toward Adult Contemporary formats.
- (e) The Album cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.
- (f) The Album must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and appear in:
 - (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart; or
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 50 Australian Artists Albums Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

5.7 Best Blues & Roots Album

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (c) Only Album recordings are eligible.
- (d) The Album must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period.
- (e) This category encompasses both contemporary and traditional blues forms and contemporary adaptations of Australian traditional music and/or folklore.
- (f) The Album cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.

5.8 Best Children's Album

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists, groups, soundtracks and various artist projects are eligible.

- (c) Only Album recordings are eligible.
- (d) The Album must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period.
- (e) This category encompasses recordings where the form and content are directed towards a pre-teen demographic.
- (f) In the case of compilations, entries must comprise 50% material recorded specifically for that compilation.
- (g) The Album cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.

5.9 Best Country Album

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (c) Only Album recordings are eligible.
- (d) The Album must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period.
- (e) This category encompasses country music, both contemporary and traditional.
- (f) The Album cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards and must have appeared in either:
 - (i) the Top 20 of the ARIA Country Albums Chart; or
 - (ii) the Australian Country Albums Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

5.10 Best Dance / Electronic Release

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists, groups, and production teams are eligible.
- (c) Album and Single recordings are eligible provided they have been commercially released during the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period.
- (d) Artists working primarily within the dance genre e.g.: House, Techno, Trance, Hardcore, Garage, Breakbeat, Drum & Bass, Disco and Electronica are eligible. In the case of a remixed Album or Single, the production team(s) and the original recording artist(s) must both meet the Artist eligibility criteria (see Section 4.3), and the release must qualify for inclusion in either the ARIA Albums or Singles chart. The ARIA member must also nominate whether the production team or the original recording artist would be the recipient of the ARIA Award in this category.
- (e) The Album or Single cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards. Note that, if an original version has been entered in the 'Best Pop' category, a remix is ineligible in the 'Dance / Electronic Release' category.
- (f) The Album or Single must have been surveyed for:
 - (i) the Top 20 ARIA Dance Singles; or
 - (ii) the Top 20 ARIA Dance Albums Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

- (g) Note that for the purpose of this category only, remixed tracks that meet all other relevant criteria, are eligible for entry in this category.

5.11 Best Pop Release

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (c) Album and Single recordings are eligible.
- (d) The Album or Single must be directed toward CHR/Top 40 formats.
- (e) The Album or Single cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.
- (f) The recording must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have appeared in:
- (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart; or
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 100 Singles Chart, or
 - (iii) the ARIA Australian Artist Top 50 Singles Chart; or
 - (iv) the ARIA Australian Artist Top 50 Albums Chart,
published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

5.12 Best Rock Album

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (c) Only Album recordings are eligible.
- (d) The Album must be directed toward Contemporary Rock, Modern Rock and Active Rock formats.
- (e) The Album cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.
- (f) The Album must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have appeared in:
- (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart; or
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 50 Australian Artists Albums Chart,
published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

5.13 Best Hard Rock / Heavy Metal Album

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (c) Only Album recordings are eligible.
- (d) The Album must be directed toward Hard Rock or Heavy Metal formats.

- (e) The Album cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.
- (f) The Album must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have appeared in:
 - (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart; or
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 50 Australian Artists Albums Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

5.14 Best Hip Hop / Rap Release

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Album and Single recordings are eligible.
- (c) Solo artists, groups, and production teams are eligible. The Album or Single must be directed towards the Hip Hop / Rap format.
- (d) The Album or Single must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have appeared in:
 - (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart;
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 100 Singles Chart;
 - (iii) ARIA Top 40 Hip Hop/R&B Albums Chart;
 - (iv) ARIA Top 40 Hip Hop/R&B Singles Chart;
 - (v) ARIA Top 20 Australian Hip Hop/R&B Singles Chart; or
 - (vi) ARIA Top 10 Australian Hip Hop/R&B Albums Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.
- (e) The Album or Single cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.
- (f) The ARIA member must also nominate whether the production team or the original recording artist would be the recipient of the ARIA Award in this category.

5.15 Best Soul / R&B Release

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Album and Single recordings are eligible.
- (c) Solo artists, groups, and production teams are eligible. Artists working primarily within the R&B, Soul, Funk, Reggae and Dancehall genres, are eligible.
- (d) The Album or Single must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have been surveyed for the:
 - (i) ARIA Top 40 Hip Hop/R&B Albums Chart; or
 - (ii) ARIA Top 40 Hip Hop/R&B Singles Chart;published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

- (e) The Album or Single cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.
- (f) The ARIA member must also nominate whether the production team or the original recording artist would be the recipient of the ARIA Award in this category.

5.16 Best Alternative Release

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (c) Album and Single recordings are eligible.
- (d) This category encompasses Album and Single recordings which are directed towards an Alternative format. The Album or Single must embody experimental, innovative, eclectic or progressive musical styles and attitudes which diverge from mainstream music formats and are not easily classified into other genre categories.
- (e) The Album or Single cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.
- (f) The recording must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have appeared in:
 - (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart; or
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 100 Singles Chart, or
 - (iii) the ARIA Australian Artist Top 50 Singles Chart; or
 - (iv) the ARIA Australian Artist Top 50 Albums Chart;published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

6. FINE ARTS AWARDS CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

6.1 Best Classical Album

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (c) Only Album recordings are eligible. Recordings where a minimum of 50% of artists featured on the Album packaging meet the Artist eligibility criteria (see Section 4.3) are eligible, even when ensembles or orchestras contain more than 50% of non-Australian artists.
- (d) The Album cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.
- (e) The Album must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and must have been surveyed for the ARIA Top 20 Core Classical Albums Chart during the Chart Eligibility Period.

6.2 Best Jazz Album

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (c) Only Album recordings are eligible. Recordings where a minimum of 50% of artists featured on the Album packaging meet the Artist eligibility criteria (see Section 4.3) are eligible, even when ensembles or orchestras contain more than 50% of non-Australian artists.
- (d) The Album cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.
- (e) The Album must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period.

6.3 Best World Music Album

- (a) Judged by a Judging School. Note: this is a genre category.
- (b) Solo artists and groups are eligible.
- (c) Only Album recordings are eligible.
- (d) The Album must be released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period.
- (e) This category encompasses predominately Traditional, Indigenous, Ethnic, Folk or Cross-Cultural music.
- (f) The Album cannot be entered in any other genre category of the Awards.

7. ARTISAN AWARDS CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

7.1 Best Cover Art

- (a) Judged by the Voting Academy.
- (b) This category awards original cover graphics by designers who meet the Artist eligibility requirements as set out in Section 4.3. Criteria for judging includes:
 - (i) originality of design concept;
 - (ii) overall design appreciation; and
 - (iii) merchandising impact.
- (c) Releases which are released during the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period and meet the general eligibility criteria may be eligible for this Award category even though they may not meet specific criteria for other Awards categories. For the purposes of clarity, this may include a greatest hits Album or a new compilation of previously recorded works.
- (d) The Award in this category is presented to the designer(s) of the cover who must meet the general eligibility criteria for Artists (as set out in Section 4.3 of this document). In the case of a co-designer, all parties must individually meet the General Eligibility Criteria for Artists set out in Section 4.3.

7.2 Engineer - Best Engineered Release

- (a) Judged by a Judging School.
- (b) A single track, multiple tracks (from a Single or Album release), or an entire Album may be submitted for each engineer. DVD releases are not eligible.
- (c) Only work released during the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period will be considered.
- (d) Only mix engineers and co-mix engineers referred to in Section 7.2(e), are eligible to be considered for this category.
- (e) International product is eligible but mix engineer entrants must accord with the General Eligibility Criteria for Artists (as set out in Section 4.3 of this document). In the case of a co-mix engineer, all entrants must individually meet the General Eligibility Criteria for Artists set out in Section 4.3.
- (f) The release must appear in:
 - (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart;
 - (ii) The ARIA Top 100 Singles Chart;
 - (iii) the ARIA Top 50 Australian Artists Singles Chart; or
 - (iv) the ARIA Top 50 Australian Artists Albums Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

7.3 Producer – Best Produced Release

- (a) Judged by a Judging School.

-
- (b) A single track, multiple tracks (from a Single or Album release), or an entire Album may be submitted for each producer. DVD releases are not eligible.
 - (c) Only work released during the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period will be considered.
 - (d) Only producers and co-producers referred to in 7.3 (e) are eligible to be considered for this category.
 - (e) International product is eligible, but producer entrants must accord with the General Eligibility Criteria for Artists (as set out in Section 4.3 of this document). In the case of co-producers, all entrants must individually meet the General Eligibility Criteria for Artists set out in Section 4.3.
 - (f) The release must appear in:
 - (i) the ARIA Top 100 Albums Chart;
 - (ii) the ARIA Top 100 Singles Chart;
 - (iii) the ARIA Top 50 Australian Artists Singles Chart; or
 - (iv) the ARIA Top 50 Australian Artists Albums Chart,published during the Chart Eligibility Period.

8. PUBLIC VOTED AWARDS CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

In 2026, ARIA will present four Publicly Voted Awards. Listed below are the category definitions and nomination methodology for each category. Voters will be asked to select a winner from a nominee pool provided by ARIA or by the Voting Academy as applicable. The method of voting by the general public in each category will be determined by ARIA each year.

8.1 Song of the Year

- (a) The nominee pool for Song of the Year will be drawn from eligible Single releases by Australian artists as defined in Section 4.3.
- (b) The ten highest selling Singles from these entries, based on ARIA sales statistics for the charts published between 26 August 2025 and 24 August 2026 inclusive, will form the nominee pool. Sales of different releases by the same artist during the period cannot be aggregated for the purpose of this category. Qualifying releases must have been released in the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period, but may be an Album track subsequently released as a Single if the official media or video servicing date is within either Eligibility Period.
- (c) Products previously nominated for the ARIA Awards in this award category are ineligible.
- (d) An artist will only appear on the nominee list once, even if that artist has multiple releases that may otherwise be eligible.
- (e) ARIA members will be contacted in advance of the nominations announcement, so that they can provide the necessary collateral materials (e.g. cover art images).

8.2 Most Popular International Artist

- (a) The nominee pool for Most Popular International Artist will be drawn from the ten highest selling artists, based on aggregated ARIA Album sales statistics for the charts published between 26 August 2025 and 24 August 2026 inclusive. Sales will be derived from the ARIA Top 100 Albums charts. Qualifying releases must consist of at least 90% new recordings and must have been first released either during the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period.
- (b) ARIA members will be contacted in advance of the nominations announcement, so that they can provide the necessary collateral materials (e.g. cover art images).

8.3 Best Australian Live Act

- (a) The Voting Academy will determine the final 10 nominees, which will then form the nominee pool for public voting.
- (b) ARIA members may enter eligible Artists as part of the normal entry process. The entries must meet the Artist eligibility criteria set out in Section 4.3 of this document.
- (c) The Artist must have performed live at no less than three ticketed events (which may include a music festival) held in at least one Australian State and / or Territory during the Current Eligibility Period. For the purpose of this category, the criteria is limited to live performances with an in-person audience. Performances that are live streamed only are not eligible.
- (d) The Award in this category will be presented to both the Artist and the promoter(s) managing the relevant live performance or tour. When submitting an entry in this category, ARIA Members will have the option to list the relevant promoter(s) of the live performance or tour with their entry.

8.4 Best Video

- (a) The Voting Academy will determine the final 10 nominee clips, which will then go forward for public voting.
- (b) The Award in this category is presented to both the artist and the Director of the entered video, both of whom must meet the General Eligibility Criteria for Artists as set out in Section 4.3 of this document.
- (c) If the Single was not commercially released then the media servicing date or the video servicing date (determined by the 'published' date listed on the label or artist's YouTube channel) must fall within the Current Eligibility Period or the Previous Eligibility Period.
- (d) ARIA members may enter eligible clips as part of the normal entry process.
- (e) ARIA members are requested to limit entries to those video clips that have had at least 50,000 online views in Australia (across all available service platforms) during the Current Eligibility Period, and may be asked to provide confirmation that the threshold has been met.

APPENDIX A - BEST INDEPENDENT RELEASE STATUTORY DECLARATION

If requested, completed Statutory declarations should be emailed to awards@aria.com.au

CONSULTATION

SCHEDULE 1: RECORD COMPANY

Record Company Name	
ABN	
Registered Business Address	

SCHEDULE 2: NOMINATED RECORDING/S

Title of Nominated Single or Album	Artist/Group

SCHEDULE 3: MEDIA AND DIGITAL SERVICE PROVIDER SERVICING PERSONNEL

Name of Person	Name of Employer/Company

I believe that the statements in this declaration are true in every particular and I understand that a person who intentionally makes a false statement in a statutory declaration is guilty of an offence under section 11 of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*, the punishment for which is imprisonment for a term of 4 years..

Signed	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/>
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(signature of the person making the declaration)

Email address or telephone number of person making the declaration	<input type="text"/>
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Declared at	<input type="text"/>		
On this	<input type="text"/>	Day of	<input type="text"/>
	<small>Date</small>		<small>Month</small>
			2026

Observed by me,	<input type="text"/>
------------------------	----------------------

(signature of the person observing the declaration being made)

Full name	<input type="text"/>
Occupation	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>

*Email address and/or telephone
number of person observing the
declaration being made*

--

A statutory declaration under section 9 of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959* may be made before–

(1) a person who is currently licensed or registered under a law to practise in one of the following occupations:

Architect	Chiropractor	Dentist
Financial adviser	Financial Planner	Legal practitioner
Medical practitioner	Midwife	Migration agent registered under Division 3 of Part 3 of the <i>Migration Act 1958</i>
Nurse	Occupational therapist	Optometrist
Patent attorney	Pharmacist	Physiotherapist
Psychologist	Trade marks attorney	Veterinary surgeon

(2) a person who is enrolled on the roll of the Supreme Court of a state or territory, or the High Court of Australia, as a legal practitioner (however described);
or

(3) a person who is in the following list:

Accountant who is:

- a) a fellow of the National Tax Accountants' Association; or b) a member of any of the following:
- i. Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand;
 - ii. the Association of Taxation and Management Accountants;
 - iii. CPA Australia;
 - iv. the Institute of Public Accountants

Agent of the Australian Postal Corporation who is in charge of an office supplying postal services to the public

APS employee engaged on an ongoing basis with 5 or more years of continuous service who is not specified in another item in this list

Australian Consular Officer or Australian Diplomatic Officer (within the meaning of the *Consular Fees Act 1955*)

Bailiff

Bank officer with 5 or more continuous years of service

Building society officer with 5 or more years of continuous service

Chief executive officer of a Commonwealth court

Clerk of a court

Commissioner for Affidavits

Commissioner for Declarations

Credit union officer with 5 or more years of continuous service

Employee of a Commonwealth authority engaged on a permanent basis with 5 or more years of continuous service who is not specified in another item in this list

Employee of the Australian Trade and Investment Commission who is:

- (a) in a country or place outside Australia; and
- (b) authorised under paragraph 3 (d) of the *Consular Fees Act 1955*; and
- (c) exercising the employee's function at that place

Employee of the Commonwealth who is:

- (a) at a place outside Australia; and
- (b) authorised under paragraph 3 (c) of the *Consular Fees Act 1955*; and
- (c) exercising the employee's function at that place

Engineer who is:

- a) a member of Engineers Australia, other than at the grade of student; or
- b) a Registered Professional Engineer of Professionals Australia; or
- c) registered as an engineer under a law of the Commonwealth, a state or territory; or
- d) registered on the National Engineering Register by Engineers Australia

Finance company officer with 5 or more years of continuous service

Holder of a statutory office not specified in another item in this list

Judge

Justice of the Peace

Magistrate

Marriage celebrant registered under Subdivision C of Division 1 of Part IV of the *Marriage Act 1961*

Master of a court

Member of the Australian Defence Force who is:

- a) an officer
- b) a non-commissioned officer within the meaning of the *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982* with 5 or more years of continuous service
- c) a warrant officer within the meaning of that Act

Member of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy

Member of the Governance Institute of Australia Ltd

Member of:

- a) the Parliament of the Commonwealth
- b) the Parliament of a state
- c) a territory legislature
- d) a local government authority

Minister of religion registered under Subdivision A of Division 1 of Part IV of the *Marriage Act 1961*

Notary public, including a notary public (however described) exercising functions at a place outside

- a) the Commonwealth
- b) the external territories of the Commonwealth

Permanent employee of the Australian Postal Corporation with 5 or more years of continuous service who is employed in an office providing postal services to the public

Permanent employee of

- a) a state or territory or a state or territory authority
- b) a local government authority

with 5 or more years of continuous service, other than such an employee who is specified in another item of this list

Person before whom a statutory declaration may be made under the law of the State or Territory in which the declaration is made

Police officer

Registrar, or Deputy Registrar, of a court

Senior executive employee of a Commonwealth authority

Senior executive employee of a State or Territory


SES employee of the Commonwealth

Sheriff

Sheriff's officer

Teacher employed on a permanent full-time or part-time basis at a school or tertiary education institution

APPENDIX B - BEST INDEPENDENT RELEASE CONFIRMATION FORM

		BEST INDEPENDENT RELEASE – CONFIRMATION FORM	
First Name:		Surname:	
Record Company Name:		Record Company ABN:	
Record Company Registered Business Address:			

I confirm the following to the Australian Recording Industry Association Limited (“ARIA”) on behalf of the Record Company:

1. I confirm that I hold this position at the Record Company, and the statement ticked below is true and correct *(please tick only one box)*:

I am the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
 I am the Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
 I am a Company Director
2. The Record Company wants to enter a release for consideration in the “Best Independent Release” category in the 2026 ARIA Awards. The title of the single or album that the Record Company wants to enter is set out in Schedule 1 (the “**Nominated Recording/s**”).
3. I confirm that the statement ticked below is true and correct for the duration of the Eligibility Period *(please tick only one box)*:

Option A	Option B
<input type="checkbox"/> The Artist/Group (defined in Schedule 1) or the Record Company: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) funds all artist and repertoire and marketing costs for the Nominated Recording/s; and (ii) undertakes its own local marketing and promotion (including media and digital service provider servicing) for the Nominated Recording/s. I confirm that only the people listed in Schedule 2 provided the media and digital service provider servicing for the Nominated Recording/s during the Eligibility Period. 	<input type="checkbox"/> One of the ARIA Levy Members or EMI Music Australia Pty Ltd (“EMI”) has provided the artist and repertoire costs and/or the marketing costs for the Nominated Recording but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) these aforementioned costs are fully recoupable and repayable in full to the ARIA Levy Member or EMI; and (ii) the Artist/Group (defined in Schedule 1) or the Record Company undertakes its own local marketing and promotion (including media and digital service provider servicing) for the Nominated Recording/s. I confirm that only the people listed in Schedule 2 provided the media and digital service provider servicing for the Nominated Recording/s during the Eligibility Period.

4. I confirm that the Record Company is not owned in whole or in part by any of the ARIA Levy Members, EMI or their respective affiliates or subsidiaries during the Eligibility Period.
5. I confirm that the Record Company has not entered into an exclusive licence for Australia with any of the ARIA Levy Members, EMI or their respective affiliates or subsidiaries in respect of the Nominated Recording/s during the Eligibility Period.
6. I agree that the CEO, CFO or a Director of the Record Company will sign a Statutory Declaration, if requested by ARIA, in order to confirm the statements set out in this form and the eligibility of the Record Company’s entry. I agree that if ARIA requires a Statutory Declaration to be signed, it will be in a format provided by ARIA and it will be properly signed, witnessed, and returned to ARIA within 2 business days of receipt of the request from ARIA. If ARIA does not receive the properly signed Statutory Declaration within 2 business days, then ARIA may at its discretion, exclude the Record Company’s entry in the “Best Independent Release” category.

DEFINITIONS

ARIA Levy Members means Sony Music Entertainment Australia Pty Ltd, Universal Music Australia Pty Limited and Warner Music Australia Pty Limited.

Eligibility Period means the period occurring between 23 August 2025 and 21 August 2026 inclusive.

SCHEDULE 1: NOMINATED RECORDING/S

Title of Nominated Single or Album	Artist/Group

SCHEDULE 2: MEDIA AND DIGITAL SERVICE PROVIDER SERVICING PERSONNEL

Name of Person	Name of Employer/Company

CONFIRMATION AND SIGNATURE

I certify that my responses in this form are true and complete.

Signature:

Date: