



The state of Australian Radio and how it affects artists in 2024.

Breaking down the different types of radio and discussing their relevance for independent (emerging / developing) artists.

Within the landscape of the Australian music industry, the role of radio has always been regarded as a crucial aspect of artist discovery and promotion. However, as 2024 progresses, the dynamics have shifted significantly. This article delves into the state of Australian radio, exploring its three primary forms—Community Radio, Digital Radio, and Commercial Radio—and analyzes the challenges artists face in a digital era dominated by streaming platforms.

Let's begin by defining the different forms of Radio in AU /NZ:

Please note: this article is specific to the AU/ NZ territory, if you are an artist looking to expand your knowledge of radio internationally please contact us: info@cartelmanagementaus.com.

Community radio, often overlooked by artists, plays a vital role in connecting with local audiences. These not-for-profit stations serve specific localities, offering a platform for artists to engage with communities beyond metropolitan areas. Community-based campaigns can be instrumental for tour promotion and gaining insights into local tastes. For independent artists, understanding the importance of these stations can be a game-changer. Out of all of the forms of AU /NZ radio, community radio continues to be the only form that allows meaningful discovery of new artists with the easy ability to directly engage. Although these stations do not generally have the listenership of a digital or a commercial station, the listenership that they do foster is loyal and can be strategically positioned for an artists growth.

Digital radio, accessible through the internet, has become a significant player in the Australian music scene. Platforms like Triple J Unearthed, FBi Radio and CADA showcase the power of digital syndication. Artists can leverage digital radio for their development by creating shareable assets, such as soundbytes, for third-party endorsement. This form of radio expands an artist's reach, transcending geographical limitations.

Commercial radio, arguably the most popular form, dominates mainstream music broadcasting. Operating on profit-driven models, these stations follow strict guidelines for airing advertisements. For artists, securing airplay on commercial radio can lead to widespread exposure, but the challenges are immense, given the limited spots available and the intense competition. The reality is that commercial radio is always the last form of radio to support artists and often rely heavily on singles support over a period prior to consideration. For artists at a local level, we generally recommend not to focus on this area until you have a considerable audience and attention on your release(s).

Misconceptions about the impact of radio play create a significant challenge within the Australian and New Zealand music scenes. Many independent artists believe that securing a spot will automatically build a substantial audience. However, the passive nature of radio consumption in this market often results in limited audience capturing,

leaving artists disillusioned. The reality of a saturated market exacerbates the challenges. With a plethora of talented artists vying for limited spots on stations, competition is fierce. This scarcity of available spots puts additional pressure on artists to stand out in a crowded field.

The emergence of Digital Streaming Platforms (DSPs) like Spotify and Apple Music has reshaped the music discovery landscape. The algorithmic playlists and data-driven recommendations on these platforms outshine traditional radio in generating artist discovery. The vast amount of user data analyzed by DSPs allows for highly personalized recommendations, and experiences rendering radio somewhat obsolete in the discovery process.

Even stations like Triple J, known for being tastemakers and youth-focussed, face challenges in staying relevant. The struggle to remain at the forefront of digital age music consumption often results in the addition of records from artists with established followings. This poses a challenge for local independent artists trying to navigate the sea of saturation for exposure that may not translate into meaningful fan development.

As we navigate the complex currents of the Australian music industry in 2024, understanding the nuances of each radio form and the evolving challenges for artists is paramount. While radio remains a significant player, artists must adapt to the changing landscape dominated by streaming platforms. The key lies in striking a balance between traditional and digital channels, ensuring a comprehensive strategy that aligns with the realities of the modern music scene.