



CARTEL MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA

The 2023 Music Landscape.

What you need to know to develop a music project in 2023.

Welcome to the music industry in 2023. Generally, at this time of year most artists / bands and projects have the feeling of utter excitement at what the very near future may hold. Most projects have a solid idea of what their first single / big move will be and things are looking up. We wanted to start 2023 with a simple article that outlines the 2023 music landscape in AUNZ and a few clear focuses for projects that wish to create a career out of their art. At this early stage of the year, your goals, strategies, processes and plans should already be in motion, having a really solid and realistic understanding of what the next 12 months will look like for your project is really important, and although there is always room to move, the bare bones of your growth should be there. With these plans it is important to understand where the project fits within the wider music landscape.

The music landscape is ever changing, and this year will be no different. The power every artist has right now is their abundant access to resources. Distribution is at the click of a finger, digital stores are in a position to allow artists' music to reach basically anyone in the world with a smartphone, and social media allows artists to talk directly with their audience at a rate that is improving everyday. How is that different to 2022 you may ask? The difference between this year and last is simple, maturity. With social, digital, music platforms and most importantly the audience becoming more mature means it will become more important for artists to focus on their real, engaged audience communities. Up until this point, landing editorial playlisting or radio play was a way to inflate numbers and give the perception of a successful project but with this approach consistently not resulting in sustainability via ticket / merchandise sales, these artists WILL fall flat this year unless drastically changing their approach.

Below we have listed a few things you should be aware of + actioning across 2023 to grow your project to a sustainable position.

***Please note:** We understand that all artists / projects are different and there is no one size fits all method to grow in this market. The below are things that we feel all artists should consider, when thinking about developing sustainability in the future.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF IT? THIS WILL DETERMINE YOUR ACTIONS

It's easy for everyone to say that they wish to tour globally, have hit songs etc. etc., but deep in your soul, what do YOU actually want out of this? If music is just a passion and something of an escape to you, then the rest of this article is not for you - continue creating and expressing your vision. It's so important to understand EXACTLY what you want your artist project to be, as this will determine your actions, time, investment and your overall growth moving forward. If you are questioning how important your artist project is to you, we would suggest reading through the rest of this document and viewing it as the absolute bare minimum required to grow a project. If you cannot commit, you have your answer.

BACK CATALOGUE OF MUSIC / RELEASE CONSISTENCY MATTERS

We harp on about this often but working off a back catalogue of music is the cornerstone of any project - big or small; signed or indie. Working off a back catalogue allows artists to release consistently which, in 2023, should be a priority. With the maturity of audience, social and music platforms, comes saturation. By developing through a consistent catalogue of releases, you are giving audiences multiple glimpses into your project and have more of a chance of building a consistent community of 'super fans'.

When you look back on your project when you are 90 years old (and hopefully all of your goals have been met) you will not be looking back at one single, one album or one EP, you will be looking back at an entire back catalogue of music that built you to that point. Every release has one job, and that is to build into the next. The mindset of releasing for artists in 2023 needs to change from, focussing on one to the next, to focussing on building a story via multiple releases over a sustained period of time.

UNDERSTAND THE PLATFORMS YOUR AUDIENCE ARE USING

(For most artists) 100% of your audience is available to stream via one or all of the streaming platforms. If you do not have an in-built processes around all streaming platforms and understand how they work internally, how to create 'meaningful audiences' on them and how to personally utilise them, you will not create sustainability.

We have multiple documents available to you in regards to understanding different stores like Spotify and Youtube below:

Repeat listeners on Spotify article [here](#)

The Importance of YouTube article [here](#)

Getting Playlists article [here](#)

On a day to day basis we deal with multiple artists that refuse to utilise certain social platforms because they 'don't like it', or are 'not comfortable using it' etc., and although we can agree and sympathise with this, it doesn't mean that you should not be utilising particular platforms.

There are a few realities in 2023 that artists need to understand when it comes to social media:

- Your audience are on TikTok and YouTube shorts. This is a fact.
- You will get less buy back on Instagram, than you will on TikTok & Youtube
- Social Media has more power than your performances.

CREATE PROCESS TO GET YOUR MUSIC TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Taking the above into consideration - each release, each performance and each platform should have key processes you can implement to ensure your desired growth or outcome is achieved.

Please understand that the only person that needs to be impressed by your original music is yourself, no one else. You will never release a piece of music that you think is sub par, and following that, your only job is to expose that piece of music to an audience who is likely to care. Ultimately, the audience will decide as to whether they like it or not. Artists need to be acutely aware that the success of a release should never be judged on their perceived notion of how good they think the song is, rather, the success of a release should be determined based on the process undertaken to actually get it to an audience that's likely to care. Relying on process allows artists to measure everything and attach purpose to every action.

UNDERSTAND & UTILISE YOUR STRENGTHS TO BUILD FINANCIAL STABILITY

For more in depth about understanding finances please read our article on it [here](#).

A career as a creative is not a one size fits all method. There are multiple ways to achieve sustainability, depending on a number of things including: your project, the genre and style, where your strengths and weaknesses lie, the time with which you allow yourself to develop and grow, your commitment to all facets (touring, production, constant learning, relationship building, social media etc.). The main factor separating those who are creating a career (and therefore, sustainability as an artist) are the measurable actions for every aspect of the project. Everyone has different strengths & weaknesses and understanding how to learn from weaknesses and leverage on strengths can be potentially a good way to earn a more stable income.

Some examples of this are:

- if your strength is in production, there may be room to produce for artists that aren't so strong for a negotiated fee, or potentially creating things like beat / sample packs to sell via websites like Splice.
- If your songwriting / vocal work is your strength, creating toplines for other artists for a negotiated fee.
- If you have a loyal fanbase and want to lean into the fashion world, creating and selling merchandise when there is demand. Ultimately, your strengths and passions can dictate which parts of the project to monetise. This is not an overnight build, artists still need to develop strong networking relationships + trust in these areas to build this side of the project.

TREAT IT LIKE A JOB.

This doesn't need a lot of explaining.

It's important to note that creating a career out of anything requires a certain kind of mindset. Viewing an artist project as a job sets a tone for artists to keep themselves accountable to certain tasks. Viewing an artform as a career is often a bitter pill for artists to swallow, as creativity is derived to depict freedom in its purest form and - more often than not - creatives cannot cross this mindset barrier as they feel it limits their craft. In reality though, not being able to curate a career mindset is a direct result of a lack of motivation to grow other areas of the project that are deemed 'difficult' including administration tasks, emails, financial, ABN and business set-ups etc.

If you want to create a career out of your project, you NEED to act as if it is your job. We deal with artists on a daily basis that dream about hitting their goals, say that they want to develop and are willing to develop over a sustained period but the reality is that they are trying to find a quick fix. Those artists never create sustainability, as they never keep themselves / their team accountable, they do the bare minimum or take no action at all in the areas of the project they don't find passion in, and ultimately they quit. . Don't be that artist..

We wish you the best of luck developing your project this year, and want you to know that you are not alone. It's okay that it's hard but there are always ways around it. We are always here for you and look forward to chatting throughout 2023.