



MUSIC POLICY

2026/2027

Version 3.0

March 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Music Policy is to establish clear guidelines for the selection, scheduling and broadcast of music on RAT FM.

This policy ensures that music programming:

- Reflects the diverse interests of the Ballarat community.
- Supports Australian artists and emerging musicians.
- Maintains a consistent station sound and identity.
- Provides fairness and transparency in music selection.
- Meets all applicable copyright and broadcasting obligations.
- Encourages diversity rather than commercial repetition.

2. Guiding Principles

RAT FM believes music should:

- Entertain.
- Inform.
- Reflect the local community.
- Promote Australian culture.
- Encourage musical discovery.
- Represent different generations and cultures.
- Support independent artists.
- Be selected on merit rather than commercial influence.

Music broadcast by RAT FM should enhance the station's identity as Ballarat's contemporary community radio station while remaining inclusive of listeners from all backgrounds.

3. Station Sound

RAT FM's core sound is:

- Contemporary Hits
- Dance
- Adult Contemporary
- 80s
- 90s
- 2000s
- Current Hits

The station aims to provide an energetic, upbeat and familiar sound while regularly introducing listeners to new music.

Programming should maintain variety and avoid excessive repetition.

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4. Music Mix

Unless otherwise approved by the Program Director, the overall station music mix should approximately comprise:

- Current Music (Last 24 Months) 30%
- Recent Music (2-10 Years) 25%
- Classic Hits (1980-2015) 35%
- Australian Independent Artists 10%

These percentages are indicative and may vary according to programming requirements.

5. Australian Music

RAT FM is committed to supporting Australian music.

The station will endeavour to broadcast:

- Minimum 30% Australian music across the broadcast week.
- Minimum 25% Australian music during daytime programming.
- Increased Australian content during Australian Music Month.
- Additional support for Victorian artists.
- Additional support for Ballarat musicians.

Australian music includes:

- Established artists
- Emerging artists
- Independent releases
- Community artists
- Indigenous artists

6. Local Music

RAT FM recognises its responsibility to support local musicians.

The station will:

- Accept submissions from Ballarat artists.
- Broadcast locally produced music.
- Conduct artist interviews.
- Promote local releases.
- Support live performances.
- Record and broadcast local concerts where practical.
- Local artists will not be charged to have music considered.

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7. Music Selection

Music is selected based upon:

- Production quality.
- Listener appeal.
- Suitability for the target audience.
- Artistic merit.
- Diversity.
- Community relevance.
- Technical recording quality.
- Station format.

Music will not be selected based solely upon:

- Commercial success.
- Personal relationships.
- Financial incentives.
- Gifts or promotional items.

8. Music Rotation

To avoid listener fatigue:

- No song should generally repeat within four hours.
- Major artists should be separated wherever possible.
- Similar sounding songs should be separated.
- Music scheduling software should be configured to maximise variety.

Exceptions apply to specialist programming.

9. Specialty Programs

RAT FM supports specialist music programming including:

- Dance
- Country
- Blues
- Jazz
- Alternative
- Indigenous music
- LGBTQIA+ music
- Local music
- Electronic
- Classic Rock
- Cultural music

These programs may operate outside the station's primary format while remaining consistent with community broadcasting objectives.

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10. Music Requests

Listeners are encouraged to submit requests.

Requests may be accepted where:

- The track is available.
- The recording quality is acceptable.
- The lyrics are suitable.
- The request fits the program format.

Presenters retain editorial discretion.

11. Explicit Content

Music containing:

- Excessive swearing
- Hate speech
- Vilification
- Discriminatory language
- Graphic sexual content
- Incitement to violence

will generally not be broadcast during daytime programming.

Edited versions should be used wherever available.

Late-night specialist programs may broadcast stronger material where appropriate, provided presenters warn listeners beforehand and the content complies with applicable broadcasting standards.

12. Community Standards

Music should respect:

- Cultural diversity.
- Religious diversity.
- Gender diversity.
- Sexual diversity.
- Disability inclusion.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Programming must avoid material that promotes hatred, discrimination or unlawful conduct.

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13. Indigenous Music

RAT FM encourages increased representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

Programming should include:

- Indigenous performers.
- Indigenous language music.
- Indigenous storytelling through music.
- NAIDOC Week features.
- Reconciliation Week programming.

14. Cultural Diversity

Music programming should reflect Australia's multicultural community.

Programming should include opportunities for:

- International music.
- Community language programs.
- Cultural celebrations.
- Festival broadcasts.

15. Music Submission Policy

Artists may submit music by:

- Email.
- Online upload.
- Physical media (where accepted).

Submissions should include:

- Artist biography.
- Contact details.
- Song information.
- Lyrics (where available).
- Artwork.
- Release information.

Submission does not guarantee airplay.

16. Presenter Responsibilities

Presenters must:

- Follow approved playlists where required.
- Support station music objectives.
- Correctly announce artist and title where practical.
- Avoid excessive repetition.
- Respect copyright.
- Seek approval before introducing unsuitable material.

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17. Program Producer Responsibilities

Program producers should:

- Ensure music reflects program objectives.
- Balance familiar and new music.
- Promote Australian content.
- Support local artists.
- Keep playlists accurate.

18. Music Director Responsibilities

The Music Director is responsible for:

- Maintaining the music library.
- Scheduling music.
- Reviewing new releases.
- Managing rotations.
- Monitoring music balance.
- Reviewing listener feedback.
- Supporting presenters.
- Removing unsuitable material.

19. Copyright

All music broadcast by RAT FM must comply with:

- APRA AMCOS licensing requirements.
- PPCA licensing requirements.
- Copyright Act 1968.
- Any applicable digital streaming licences.

No presenter may use unauthorised copies of music.

20. Music Library

The station music library shall:

- Be securely maintained.
- Include metadata where possible.
- Record copyright information.
- Prevent duplicate versions.
- Remove corrupted files.
- Archive historical recordings.

21. Sponsorship Influence

Sponsors shall not influence music selection.

No commercial entity may require the broadcast of specific music in exchange for sponsorship.

Editorial independence must always be maintained.

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22. Conflicts of Interest

Presenters must declare any personal, financial or professional relationship with artists whose music they regularly promote.

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23. Listener Feedback

Listeners are encouraged to provide feedback regarding music programming.

Feedback may be considered when:

- Reviewing playlists.
- Evaluating station format.
- Supporting local artists.
- Planning specialty programs.

Editorial decisions remain with RAT FM.

24. Complaints

Complaints relating to music programming shall be handled in accordance with the RAT FM Complaints Policy.

Where appropriate, complaints will be referred to the Program Director or Board of Directors

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