



**\*\*Embargo 11am AEST, Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2018\*\***

## **WOMEN IN THE AUSTRALIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY UNITED ON RECOGNITION**

Some of the biggest names in the Australian Music Industry have joined forces to support the inaugural ***Australian Women in Music Awards (AWMA)*** to be staged in Brisbane from October 9-10, 2018.

Tina Arena, Deborah Conway, Kate Ceberano, Debra Byrne, Katie Noonan, Christine Anu, Clare Bowditch, Isabella Manfredi, Jen Cloher, Sophie Koh, Kween G, Patricia 'Little Pattie' Amphlett, the late Chrissy Amphlett, the late Ruby Hunter and APRA Chair Jenny Morris are among the stellar list of artists backing the ground-breaking initiative, which was officially announced in Brisbane today by the Queensland Minister for Women, Di Farmer.

*"As a fiercely proud Queensland artist, I am thrilled that my home state Government has shown the leadership to support this awesome initiative,"* AWMA Advisor and Artistic Director of the Queensland Music Festival Katie Noonan said.

With increasing focus on the underrepresentation of Australian women artists on the radio, in festival line-ups, as award recipients and in the boardrooms of the Australian music industry, founding Executive Director Vicki Gordon says there is no better time to shine a light on empowering and recognising the value, achievements and contributions of women.

*"History is finally on our side. We need to grab this moment with an open and united heart."* AWMA Founding Director Vicki Gordon said.

For the first time in Australian music history AWMA will turn the spotlight on women, recognising and including first nations and multicultural performers, excellence in artistry, technical & production skills, cross-cultural development, song-writing, music education, music photography, management, humanitarian work and more.

AWMA Patron, and Chair of APRA, Jenny Morris believes AWMA is long overdue.

*"I am very happy to be involved in this long overdue project. My feeling is that women and female minority groups have well and truly served their time as the under-valued, under-estimated and under-supported element of our music industry. I know there are vast numbers of men who support women and huge numbers of women who want more, so together let's create the mother of all paradigm shifts,"* Morris said.

AWMA Patron and ARIA winner, Deborah Conway, says the awards present an opportunity to recognise the diversity of contributions from women in the industry.

*"There is still a degree of reluctance to acknowledge the enormous breadth of genres that Australian women have occupied. In establishing dedicated awards for female musicians, AWMA provides whoever is given a gong another opportunity to reap some publicity for their creative enterprise,"* Conway said.

Internationally renowned Tina Arena has also lent her support.

*"I welcome this initiative to recognise and celebrate all the incredible contributions to music by Australian women,"* Arena said.

Set against a global movement of shifting dynamics around gender, AWMA Advisor and The Preatures' frontwoman Isabella Manfredi says the timing sends a powerful message.

*"The next positive step in creating a more equal playing field for all. What a momentous platform to shine a light on the amazing women in our industry,"* Manfredi said.

ARIA-winning singer/songwriter and AWMA Advisor Clare Bowditch says it's a chance to redress Australian music history.

*"An awards night to celebrate exceptional Australian Music by exceptional Australian musicians who, for reasons of history and perhaps unconscious bias or worse, have been generally overlooked? Who wouldn't want more of that kinda good thing?!? This is deeply exciting!!",* Bowditch said.

Beyond the awards, AWMA will establish an Honour Roll to acknowledge outstanding women who have made significant and lasting contributions in their chosen field and paved the way for change.

Poignantly, AWMA carries the posthumous endorsement of two of Australian music's most cherished, pioneering and respected artists, Chrissy Amphlett and Ruby Hunter as patrons, with kind permission of their families.

Charley Drayton, the husband of iconic Divinyls frontwoman, the late Chrissy Amphlett, says AWMA will keep Chrissy's legacy burning brightly.

*"Chrissy's life was full of passion and creativity and her powerful influence continues to burn vibrantly. She was a pioneering force for strong, sexy women and a ground-breaker for women to demand their place on the Australian rock scene. Chrissy would be extremely proud to stand in celebration of the achievements of women in Australian music and I am delighted her legacy will shine on as an AWMA Patron."* Charley Drayton.

The late Ruby Hunter, a proud Ngarrindjeri woman from the South Australian Riverland, is revered as one of Australia's most compelling and inspiring musical storytellers and role models. Ruby is AWMA's sole indigenous Patron, with generous permission from her husband Archie Roach and the Hunter family.

*"Ruby was a proud woman with a nurturing spirit that shone through in her songs. She was an honest songwriter who had no need to embellish those songs with sophisticated lyrics as they were straight from her heart. She wrote about domestic violence and child abuse; songs to empower women and protect children. Everything she wrote spoke of the importance of family. Ruby would be so proud to be honoured as an AWMA Patron. She was an example for other First Nations women to be the best they could be as she was."* Archie Roach.

There will be significant focus on First Nations and culturally diverse female artists and practitioners to ensure the entire AWMA program is inclusive and diverse, including a First Nations Reception to welcome ATSI women who will travel to Brisbane to attend AWMA from remote and regional Australia.

*"AWMA provides unprecedented opportunities for our Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander sisters. This is a change maker",* AWMA Advisor, artist and broadcaster Christine Anu said.

For AWMA Advisor, refugee advocate and Hip-Hop MC Kween G, AWMA represents visibility.

*"AWMA ensures that we remain visible, celebrating women is everything. I feel excited for what's to come from this important work and I am truly honoured to be involved",* Kween G said.

AWMA will present the QLD premiere of the Australian music documentary '**Her Sound-Her Story**' and host a series of forums and key note speeches to explore and promote gender and cultural equity within the Australian music industry as part of the two-day event at the Brisbane Powerhouse.

*"As a professional music photographer, it's fabulous to see an initiative that will finally give women, both artists and all the incredibly dedicated women working behind the scenes, the long overdue credit that they deserve."* Michelle Grace-Hunder, co-producer '**Her Sound-Her Story**'.

The inaugural Award ceremony will complete the AWMA program. Attendees will include artists, songwriters, producers, distributors, technicians, music educators, artist managers, publishers, label managers, music writers and industry leaders from Australia and abroad.

*"It's time to proudly stand together and celebrate the ground-breaking achievements of women in our industry over many generations. It's Time!",* broadcaster, academic and Chair of AWMA's National Advisory Council, Tracee Hutchison said.

AWMA is a long time coming but arrives with the gender-tide turning. The Australian music industry will never look the same again.

**AWMA FOUNDING DIRECTOR**

Vicki Gordon

**AWMA PATRONS**

Chrissy Amphlett (posthumous)

Ruby Hunter (posthumous)

Patricia Amphlett

Debra Byrne

Kate Ceberano

Deborah Conway

Jenny Morris

**AWMA ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIR**

Tracee Hutchison

**AWMA ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Christine Anu, Artist (TI/NSW)

Clare Bowditch, Artist (VIC)

Johanna Campbell, CAAMA (NT)

Kween G, Artist (NSW)

Sophie Koh, Artist (VIC)

Isabella Manfredi, Artist (NSW)

Katie Noonan, Artist (QLD)

Poppy Reid, Industry Observer (NSW)

[womeninmusicawards.com.au](http://womeninmusicawards.com.au)

-ENDS-

For further information, images and interview requests:

KABUKU PUBLIC RELATIONS

Belinda Dyer

[Belinda@kabukupr.com.au](mailto:Belinda@kabukupr.com.au) | 0415 686 014 | (02) 9690 2115