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## **AWMA TACKLES DISTANCE AND DIVERSITY, ANNOUNCING EIGHT RECIPIENTS FOR REGIONAL & REMOTE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM**

Supported by the Queensland Government, **Australian Women in Music Awards (AWMA)** today announced the beneficiaries of its third annual Queensland Regional Engagement Program, bringing artists and music practitioners from communities from Yarrabah and White Rock to Toowoomba and Yeppoon to Brisbane for the AWMA Conference and Award Ceremony in May.

The program offers a unique developmental experience, particularly focused on First Nations and multi cultural artists but widely open to people at different stages of their careers across the numerous areas of the music industry. Participants are fully supported to attend and participate in powerful skills development sessions providing support and encouragement with a focus on leadership combined with unique networking opportunities across the entire 2-day AWMA program.

“We believe in the power of music to change lives and the AWMA Regional Engagement Program does exactly that. Speak to anyone who has attended any of our previous events and they will ALL testify to that,” said AWMA Founding Producer and Program Director Vicki Gordon.

Minister for Women Shannon Fentiman said the Queensland Government was proud to support the regional engagement program which would create more opportunities for Australian women in music.

“The AWMA play an important role providing visibility to the challenges facing women in the industry and help to create more opportunities for Australian women in music, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds,” Minister Fentiman said.

“We still have a way to go when it comes to achieving gender equity and diversity but it’s programs like this which provide exposure opportunities and development for emerging female talent.”

The successful applicants for 2022 are:

- Aisha is a young Gunggandji woman and a singer, songwriter, guitarist and traditional owner from Yarrabah.
- Vivien Aisi from White Rock is billed as one of FNQ's most promising singers blending genres to make her 'music for the soul' embellished with Soul and R&B undertones layered with Pop.
- Amber Farnan is an indie folk pop singer-songwriter who grew up in Kamerunga in far north Queensland. Isolated from the music scene has driven Amber’s determination to pursue music.
- Ellie Hanlon is a mother of two, and a passionate event producer of the popular Airlie Beach Festival of Music amongst other things.



- Jade Holland from Maryborough is an Ambassador for the Queensland Mental Awareness Foundation. Holland's new single 'Summertime, Sunshine and You' is currently at #2 on the Australian Country Radio charts.
- Jade Kennedy, from Oonoonba in Townsville, followed her dreams of working in music and overcome the challenges of growing up regionally with a disability. She is passionate about sharing her work with others and uses her connections to give other young women - most of whom have chronic illnesses, physical disabilities or mental health issues - a chance to pursue music.
- Kate Leahy is an independent singer songwriter from Yeppoon. She has toured both East Coast Australia and Europe, performing in festivals and venues across Germany & the UK. Kate's music has been playlisted nationally on ABC Radio.
- Chloe Wilson (Cloe Terare) from Toowoomba is a rapidly emerging artist on the Indie channels as Triple J's Unearthed Feature Artist and the first Feature artist on 'The Music' for 2022.

The successful candidates will take part in a day long conference immersion with panel discussions, forums, keynote, film screening and attendance at the highlight preview event - the inaugural First Nations Hip Hop showcase **Love For My Sisters**.

The participants have been selected based on their current work, their role within the music industry and the impact they are making within their own communities.

The selectors were **Roz Papalardo** of the Cairns Festival and Cultural Performing Arts Centre, **Dr Diana Tolmie** from the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University and AWMA Lead Producer and cultural festival doyen **Gina Hall**. The recipients of the 2022 AWMA Regional Engagement Program were chosen from a diverse field of applicants across the broad expanse of regional Queensland.

"Successful applicants were of a high calibre at varying stages of their careers as artists, music producers, song writers and journalists and were chosen as much on their merit, as on how the opportunity to be involved in the program would benefit their growth in their chosen field in the music industry.

"We congratulate them all on their successful submissions," the selectors said.

Previous participants have applauded the practical and tangible career development opportunities the AWMA initiative provides. A comment from a 2019 participant summarised the mood - "Loved it! Loved it! Lifted up by it! Learned so much! Had great fun!"

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**Event and Regional Participants images [here](#).**

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



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