

## What constitutes artist success in the Australian music industries?

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### Abstract

Contemporary artists embarking on a musical career enter into a highly competitive and complex environment. Whereas the pre-digital music industries consisted of definable streams of income and markers of achievement, such as live performance opportunities, record deals, royalties, and radio play, today's music industries involve multiple platforms and strategies that artists need to engage with. Defining "success" in this new environment goes beyond standard definitions of financial independence or peer respect (Letts 2013). Success is contingent on planning for and leveraging numerous smaller successes in areas including developing "Do It Yourself" (DIY) and management skills and engaging in funding opportunities such as government grants. Artists may also employ crowdfunding or alternate means for raising capital, engaging with fans via social media, managing their online identities and personas, utilising online music video, and expanding into overseas markets in order to maintain financial viability. This research draws on a series of focus groups with artists and industry practitioners within the Australian music industries, and considers the diverse contemporary approaches that artists take in order to achieve success in their careers.

**Keywords:** Music industry, DIY, artist success, Australia

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## **1 Introduction**

The concept of 'career success' in contemporary music has been complicated in recent times by the diversification and digitisation of the music industry and music consumption. Whereas the pre-digital career model for the contemporary musician revolved around known industry components such as regular performance opportunities, labels, charts, awards, sales of recorded works, and airplay, these sectors have been affected by recent changes in the contemporary music industries. Furthermore, the changing nature of the contemporary music industry means that a variety of factors outside of instrumental and musical ability impact on the potential career development of musicians. These factors include age, appearance, identity, stylistic choices, and current musical fashions, and therefore complicate a progression from amateur to professional. Additionally, a significant number of contemporary musicians do not pursue tertiary-level music training (Letts 2013); meaning tertiary training is not necessarily a prerequisite for career success. A study by Throsby & Zednik (2010) also shows that those employed in the music industries are often also employed in other sectors, underlining the problematic assumption of a guaranteed full-time career as a musician in a climate that is highly competitive. Finally, there are a range of potential career opportunities in contemporary music which do not necessarily involve performance, including management, publishing, media, production, and so on.

Given this plurality of career possibilities and the variability of the music industries, how is 'career success' defined among contemporary musicians? This paper starts out by examining the 'traditional' markers of career success for artists (solo and band) in contemporary music, largely based on previous research. The paper then moves on to explore more recent examples of such markers and draws on focus group research conducted between 2012 and 2013 in some of the eastern states of Australia (New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria). Finally the paper makes conclusions based on the findings and indicates implications for artists active in the Australian music industries.

## 2 Traditional success in the Australian industry

The difficulty in defining success in a contemporary musical context is identified by Letts (2013: 1), who discusses industry success in the context of recruiting 'successful' participants for a study investigating "the music education of people who have made successful careers as contemporary musicians". Letts (2013: 2) reports:

*"It was decided that in the circumstances a musician whose primary income is from music is successful in the Australian context. It may be, also, that some fine musicians practise in less viable genres ... but have high artistic respect from their peers. They also are successful."*

As research participants were seconded by invitations to participate through assistance from artist managers and the Australian Performing Right Association (APRA: 2), traditional notions of success were reinforced in the study's design and are clearly aligned to revenue and/or to peer appreciation of musical ability. In addition to the number of recordings distributed for retail, Collins and Young (2014: 9) also cite the revenue generated through retail sales of recordings as a historical marker of success.

The traditional commercial aspect of musical success is also evident in the Australian Government's promotion of the international success of Australian artists. Linked to "About Australia" (Commonwealth of Australia), Australian pop music (Wells 2007) is aligned to commercial success with its description as being "... one of our most successful Australian musical exports" and is further highlighted as a cultural export:

*"Contemporary music reflects, expresses and shapes our national identity, and helps Australians find their creative voices. Millions of Australians enjoy listening to music by local artists, and the international success of many local acts has made music one of our greatest cultural exports (Commonwealth of Australia n.d.)"*

While success is linked to internationalism and commodity, in reality, statistics reveal that royalties for imported music far outweigh royal-

ties earned by Australian musicians (Australia Council for the Arts 2013b). The Contemporary Music Working Group (CMWG) reported:

*"Australia is building from a very small global export base, but such internationally successful bands [e.g. Savage Garden] highlight the potential of export earnings growth where necessary support is given. In 2005-06, overseas countries paid \$41m in music royalties to Australia, while Australia paid almost 5 times this amount to overseas countries (CMWG 2008: 1)".*

Much of the traditional success of contemporary music within Australia has been determined by its ability to be 'picked up' and subsequently heard on radio. The Codes of Practice & Guidelines (Commercial Radio Australia (CRA) 2011: 2) were *"developed in accordance with the requirements of section 123 of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 [Commonwealth, Australia]"* to ensure that a minimum proportion of Australian content is included (ibid.: 10). This has resulted in a quota of *"not less than 25%"* (ibid.: 11) of Australian music and, according to Homan (2013: 389), the content quotas *"have been invaluable in ensuring that domestic musicians and composers are heard on broadcasting formats that privilege international artists"*. A Convergence Review Committee, established in 2011, examined and assessed the effectiveness of *"the operation of media and communications regulation in Australia"* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012: vii). In relation to content quotas, the Review determined that they were *"generally effective"* (ibid.: xii) for radio but were guarded against their relevance for online services given the *"evolving state"* of online technologies (ibid.: 20), and concluded (ibid.: 78):

*"... the diversity of audio formats and music delivery mechanisms on the internet would make it difficult—if not impossible—to consistently regulate non-simulcast internet-based services through a quota system. There are also different transactions on internet-based services (for example, purchasing music as opposed to listening to advertising-supported or subscription services, the user-directed nature of some services, and subscriber and purchase models). In light of these issues, there*

*is no compelling reason to institute music quotas on internet-based services.*

In a traditional context, emerging Australian talent has been supported by Australian content requirements and resultant airplay. This is typically demonstrated through 'rotation' — the number of spins (plays) — that tracks receive each week. This common industry term stems from records or discs revolving during playback. Since the early 1980s, triple j has been an avenue for artist support and exposure; however, there has been a marked decrease in the typical number of spins talent now receives. Ten years ago, triple j's high rotation equated to 35-40 spins each week (Brandle 2013); triple j's current high rotation is 17-18 spins (Brandle 2013). In terms of relative airplay, radio is evidently a less viable medium for artist promotion and copyright collection than it has been in the past. This may be due to an increased number of artists vying for airplay in a competitive market, or a trend towards a shorter 'shelf-life' for new releases. However, despite the proliferation of competing music formats such as streaming services, radio is still seen as a core element of promotion; Rogers (2013: 159) cites various industry figures who describe radio play as a 'fundamental', 'crucial' aspect of an artist's success.

Another traditional mark of success has been inclusion of a music release on 'the charts', which correlate primarily to airplay or to record sales. Kent (2010) documents that charting "*began in Australia in March 1958, when Radio Station 2UE, Sydney, published its first giveaway chart distributed via record stores ... the 'Top 40' format was adapted from (or copied from) American radio where it had long been established successfully*". Earlier, and dating from the 1940s, success was heard through 'Hit Parades' and lists were comprised of songs — sheet music and records — and other factors including "*public requests and (perhaps) the opinions of radio stations' personnel*" (Kent 2010). Contemporary music charts are now compiled through the Australian Music Report (Top #1s and 100s) and the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA). The Australian Music Report is compiled weekly of songs which have received airplay during the previous seven days (Australian Music Report

2013). ARIA is a national industry association that supports the industry by charting record sales and hosting annual awards. The diversification away from radio as the primary means of airplay has been recognised, with ARIA providing separate charts for 'Streaming Tracks' and 'Digital Tracks'; however a significant portion of music consumption may occur outside these means, including YouTube views/listens and illegal downloading/filesharing.

The Phonographic Performance Company of Australia's (PPCA) 'most played' lists are a further traditional measure of success. PPCA lists are "measured by collating titles that appear in the PPCA radio/TV broadcast logs" during the period July to June each year (PPCA 2012: 15). However, an analysis of the PPCA charts from 2009 to 2012 show a decline in the number of Australian recordings listed in the top 25 from 5 Australian recordings (2009; 2011), 7 Australian recordings (2010) to just 2 Australian recordings being listed in 2012 (ibid.: 15-16). The PPCA lists also reveal that international artists are consistently 'favoured' in the Australian marketplace (Australia Council for the Arts 2013b). Given that Australia is ranked sixth in the top ten music markets and represents 3 per cent of the global marketplace (Australia Council for the Arts 2013a), the traditional success trajectory of label deal (Williamson and Cloonan 2007) and airplay seems almost insurmountable for Australian artists. Additionally, radio play has historically been closely linked with the record industry. Liebowitz (2004) discusses the widely believed 'symbiotic' relationship between these industries, where radio broadcast functions as a low-cost means of advertising a music product. This reinforces the central role of established music industry bodies, namely radio and labels, as gatekeepers and tastemakers who determine an artist's potential listenership and, consequently, their career success in the pre-digital model.

### **3 Contemporary success in the Australian context**

Contemporary definitions of success challenge many of the traditional definitions. Although Letts' (2013) definition of success as involving rev-

enue and/or to peer appreciation of musical ability is still relevant, the means by which an artist's revenue is earned, and how appreciation of musical ability is measured, have changed. In particular, the advent of the Internet and digital music has been linked to a fall in record sales (Rogers 2013: 26). This significant shift that has forced artists and other industry bodies to reconsider how they can create sustainable careers, has altered the pre-digital definition of a music career, and has transformed conceptions of career success.

Firstly, the digitisation of music, including production, consumption, sales, and promotion, has theoretically allowed for artists to self-manage and to undertake many of the duties previously performed by more specialised industry personnel including labels, managers, promoters, studio engineers, booking agents, and so on. Scott (2012) refers to these 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) artists as "*cultural entrepreneurs*", and defines them as "*those who create and perform music, as well as self-manage the construction of a music industry career*" (Scott, 2012: 238). For contemporary DIY artists, more career benchmarks including being discovered by label Artist and Repertoire personnel (A&R), signed, managed, and having a network of industry figures are therefore not necessarily features of a successful music career. Although the ability of digital technology to empower artists has been termed a 'myth' by some researchers (McLean et al., 2010), many aspects of artists' careers, including recording, management, and social media are increasingly within the artist's own reach. Prominent independent artists such as Mia Dyson are self-managed (Dyson 2012), and workshops such as Melbourne-based artist Jen Cloher's *I Manage My Music* (Cloher 2013) cater to the growing number of musicians who aim to self-manage.

Secondly, social media has become a crucial tool for many aspects of success in contemporary music careers. Successfully building a fan base via social media involves providing diverse and well-timed content to fans, and by building connections with other artists and organisations online in order to expand awareness. A proven fan base in specific locations can allow artists to plan tours with less risk, and an active fan community can assist the artist by producing and sharing content, such

as photographs, 'likes', discussions, and live performance videos (Lingel & Naaman 2012). This positions fans as "*promoters and co-creators*" (Vellar 2012) instead of consumers; and Rogers (2013: 157) notes that the music industry itself also relies on this critical body of enthusiasts to effectively promote artists on social media. Through platforms such as Facebook, the artist can directly contact fans, and may also choose to explore paid methods for expanding their fan base such as sponsoring links. An accompanying concern for artists when using social media is determining how to manage their identity, or their brand. Baym (2012: 308) discusses artists' approaches to constructing their online identity or identities, noting that artists necessarily navigate between "*celebrity and friend, openness and distance, equality and difference*". Baym suggests that artists must define the fan/artist relationship by selecting which medium to interact through, and how often and intensively to interact, and build an online community.

Contemporary musicians are also able to access a variety of funding sources for artistic projects, including government grants and prizes. In 2013, the Australia Council alone offers 36 grants that may be awarded for music, ranging from grants for music managers to promote their artists at international events such as SXSW (International Markets — Music Managers grant and the Live on Stage grant), for contemporary musicians to tour within Australia (Contemporary Music Touring Program grant), and to support organisations to record, produce, and market Australian music (Recording Initiative grant). Another government grant is the Australian Trade Commission's Export Market Development Grant (EMDG), which is "*a key Australian Government financial assistance program for aspiring and current exporters*" (Australian Trade Commission n.d.), although this grant is designed to reimburse many different loss-leading Australian exporting initiatives, it includes the export of contemporary music via touring. The grant currently reimburses 50 per cent of the incurred costs of promotion. Australian artists can also explore crowdfunding as an alternative means of raising capital, as a means to "*confront, bypass, or even sever ties to their labels*" (Potts 2012: 362) while simultaneously allowing fans to become "*active parti-*

*participants in the careers of these artists, helping to cultivate, curate, and produce content".*

The distribution of music and video online, and subsequent metrics of views, downloads, and streams, can be viewed as another means of measuring success. Online video, for example, can simultaneously serve as a revenue stream (via YouTube advertising), a way to raise the artist's profile (through creating 'viral' videos or by, for example, covering other musicians' works), a platform for distribution of music videos and other moving image content to existing fans (both 'official' videos and candid material), and for measuring fan engagement (through views). Download and streaming services, though in their relative infancy in Australia, similarly serve as a revenue stream, delivery platform, promotional tool, and feedback mechanism for artists. The relatively small size of the Australian music market is still an issue that artists need to deal with, however two recent developments have aided the potential reach of Australian artists.

Firstly, as mentioned previously, social media allows for fans to be reached beyond national borders, allowing artists to build overseas followings, potentially leading to touring.

This may have an impact on the perceptions of 'deal making' success within the Australian industries as it may force Australian artist managers and lawyers to move beyond the argument that the best case scenario for Australian artists is to sign directly to larger labels in larger territories by doing split territories deals. Signing directly to a US or UK independent or major label may require geographical relocation and can be considered by those representing artists as the most likely option to lead to mainstream success (Morrow 2008). However, articulating into larger markets is not without challenges:

*"Signing with a multinational record company for the world from a smaller territory and licensing the right to exploit the copyright in a pre-existing record can be challenging routes for the release of recorded products from smaller markets in larger ones" (Morrow 2008: 5).*

The perception of 'deal making success' is also increasingly at odds with the way in which social media allows for fans to be reached beyond national borders, and in the process, potentially undermines the perceived 'success' of split territories deal making. The potential for international reach online is well demonstrated by Australian artist Gotye's international success in 2012, following his single and video for "Somebody I Used To Know":

Within three weeks of "Somebody I Used To Know's" striking, stop-frame, body-painting video being posted on YouTube, the song had received more than two million hits and made it to No.1 on the Hype Machine Twitter chart (Goyte 2013).

Secondly, sync (synchronisation) represents more opportunities and potential revenue streams for artists, where music is used for television, film, or advertising. For example, Melbourne artist Chet Faker's cover of Blackstreet's "No Diggity" was recently synced with a commercial during the US Superbowl, resulting in national airplay to millions of viewers (Mann, 2013). Rogers (2013: 104) describes sync as increasingly important as a source of income, particularly its potential internationally; he cites a 15 per cent growth in sync royalties in 2010 alone, and refers to the increasing presence of music supervisors at events such as South by Southwest (SXSW) (Rogers 2013: 105).

#### **4 The findings from the study**

Seven focus groups were conducted during with a range of participants including artists, artist managers, digital/online strategists, music publishers and representatives of Government agencies. In keeping with ethics requirements, participants were able to request to be de-identified in the reporting of findings. For the purposes of this article, and as some participants elected to be de-identified, participants are represented by a category (A=Artist; I=Industry) and a corresponding participant number. This participant distinction, made for coding purposes, is in relation to the primary roles of participants and is not meant to infer that artists are not also industry personnel. Focus group tran-

scripts have been analysed and coded; the concept of 'success' was a prominent theme. The following sections report on the findings in relation to the traditional and contemporary concepts of artist success in the Australian music industry.

#### 4.1 The DIY model

The difficulties in establishing a DIY career model were identified in relation to time management and/or financial issues. With little or no financial gain proffered in career establishment and facing the real prospect that initial investment *"far outweighs what you get back"* (A1), early career artists typically need to also work a *"day job"* (I1). In many instances, the DIY model requires artists to create their own work, foster networks and *"word of mouth"* (A3). While participants were agreed that there was no one formula for success, for artists choosing the DIY route additional career skills were identified:

*"It's been a big learning curve, there is a lot to learn and do and I kind of like that about managing yourself, you have a lot to learn, there are so many skills involved. There's a lot of admin involved, there's hardly any music" (A3).*

In relation to the success of the DIY model, the distinction was made between early career artist strategies and actual or *"long term career"* (I6) strategies. Formulating teams to underpin artists was seen to benefit more established artists, rather than those at the beginning of their careers. Replicating or replacing *"the old traditional label model which is publishing ... APRA ... producer ... A&R"* (I1) with a DIY model was identified as being the responsibility of artists and that being independent meant that artists *"have all of the control to find that group"* (I1). The concept of establishing credibility and potential viability before being assisted by a team, adds weight to the notion of success breeding success.

This notion is also evident in the value added stakes of being discovered or 'unearthed' through a medium such as triple j, which adds an immediate level of success in the competitive market space:

*"It's very difficult for singer-songwriters to compete, you don't generally hear singer-songwriters on the air apart from triple j or community radio [...] It still comes back to those traditional outlets, digital is really important but the traditional outlets are really important in building your profile and working out where your audience is" (I3).*

*"... DIY and that's why radio doesn't play as many songs, because there is a lot more out there" (I12).*

Commercial radio was viewed as requiring emerging artists to show markers of success, such as having a public profile or fanbase, before allocating them airplay:

*"... apart from triple j and community radio, there's very few outlets that will actually take a punt on something that is brand new without having seen, you know, 10 other boxes ticked first" (I13).*

In contrast to DIY early career and career success more generally, the reality faced by many musicians and their subsequent need to diversify into other industry roles was identified. This reality is possibly a reflection of the music industry being a youth marketplace and/or of insufficient financial returns to meet personal responsibilities and obligations. In some contexts, diversification was viewed as compromising musical intent and integrity:

*"That's why the producing, engineering, sound, managing, tour managing, it does really become a natural progression because you have lived and breathed this world for so long that's the natural next career that you take. It's unfortunate – we're all selling our souls at some point to sustain this music world" (I1).*

In other contexts, such as music management, the prospect of broadening musical involvement and contributing to the industry was viewed positively.

## 4.2 Grant funding

In relation to successful government grant recipients, participants further reinforced the notion of success breeding success. The general perception was that to receive a grant, artists needed to have already attained a level of exposure and success:

*"... the bands that do get those grants are the ones that do have some sort of radio airplay success and manage to get overseas, they're the bands that you see a lot more" (I5).*

State and federal government funding to assist in marketing and touring was viewed as beneficial in creating exposure (I1) and particular grants, such as the Australian Trade Commission's EMDG, were identified as aiding career sustainability (I6). While government funding is available, the general consensus of participants was that grants are highly competitive with *"a lot more people going for them"* (I5) and that there are not enough funding opportunities:

*"... there's never going to be enough money to give everyone a grant who is deserving of one, so it's only for a very small group at the top and it's sporadic and it's not sustainable, it doesn't actually help someone through the cost of their career" (I2).*

For one participant, success requires a solid work ethic and the ability to secure funding did not replace the need for artists to do the *"hard yards"* (I7). There is also a danger that an over-dependence on grant funding may suggest that particular industry involvement is simply not sustainable.

## 4.3 Crowdfunding

Participants were generally positive on the subject of crowdfunding as a successful avenue for artist funding, although some negativity also surrounded it in that it is perhaps no longer innovative because *"everyone is doing it"* (I6). The concept of success breeding success was also identified in the view that crowdfunding was best suited to bands with already-established careers, and for those artists who had possibly previ-

ously had label support (18). Two participants (15, 19) noted that crowdfunding may potentially become a recognised and increasingly popular means for institutions, such as the Australia Council, to award grants that match crowdfunded capital. For this to occur, funding bodies would need to navigate the risks, such as 'exploitation', that such an approach generate before proceeding. Another participant (A3) emphasised the importance of successfully strategising a crowdfunded project, in terms of organising prize tiers, the timing of the project, and approaching fans from a constructive (rather than demanding) perspective. This participant was successful in crowdfunding an album; crowdfunding had been utilised because they had been unable *"to get a grant"* (A3).

#### **4.4 Social media, online strategies and audience reach**

Regarding the role of social media in artists' success, participants unanimously agreed that social media engagement is crucial, however some expressed concern about its demands on an artist's time. Social media was viewed as a way to nurture and create a fanbase (13), although another participant noted that social media popularity and eventual success are strongly correlated but not necessarily linked, stating:

*"Creating a buzz online, getting fans to buy tickets to a bunch of shows, that doesn't mean that you're any good at putting on a live show, because social media and building fanbases online is a skill in itself [...] it doesn't necessarily reflect the quality of the band [...] or the long-term financial success of the band" (16).*

Strategising social media engagement and communication was also viewed as an important skill. One participant was more ambivalent about Facebook's usefulness, stating:

*"If you have 10,000 fans you can probably only contact 2,000 fans because of all the different algorithms they have going and you have to sponsor a link to get more [...] I would get rid of our Facebook, I think it is a waste of time" (A1).*

However, the same participant however also noted *"I think you still need Facebook, that's the number one stop, so if you have got a new single, you do a video, put it on YouTube, then on Facebook"*. He further emphasised the demands on an artist's time:

*"It's funny you have to put so much effort into your online presence as oppose to writing songs ... trying to maintain relevance and look interesting and post these stupid little videos on YouTube and stuff for people to interact with" (A1).*

Another participant estimated that she spends:

*"40 hours a week on music, maybe 9 hours is performing time and it's probably about 15 hours of driving and then the rest is just behind a computer — designing posters, designing a banner for Facebook or updating, stuff like that" (A3).*

Of particular note was the importance of the number of likes or followers for subsequent industry successes. One participant suggested that *"a lot of bands are buying fans so they can get a booking agent"* (I1), while another noted that social media and the Internet have allowed labels and other industry entities to:

*"... divest themselves of the need to find something new [...] commercial radio in particular, the first thing they will do is look at how many Facebook likes they've got, where the YouTube video is and how many people have viewed it" (I13).*

Participants also emphasised the importance of music video, particularly via YouTube, as *"an important part of being successful"* (I3). Stressing that artists need to understand how to optimise their presence on sites such as YouTube and the Internet in general, a participant stated:

*"Be aware of what people are Googling ... if you can put your band website or an iTunes link directly there. I am so impatient with the Internet, if I cannot find something then I am on to something else. If I can't see it in the top half of the page then I am gone" (I1).*

Further noting that artists need to understand the logistics of copyright on YouTube, the participant remarked:

*"How can [artists] get those 20,000 views that someone has ripped [their] music off for? They just don't know where to start. There's a fundamental lack of understanding and education on ...]the steps you need to take in order to take control of your work, to take ownership and actually claim that content" (I1).*

Participants also emphasised the importance of immediately releasing music and video material. Recounting an incident where an artist had been told to hang on to a recorded EP until someone finds it, one participant suggested *"manufactur[ing] that [the EP] immediately, so that you can go and sell it at all of your shows, because that is revenue ... your music is your business card" (I3)*. Regarding releasing material online, another participant suggested:

*"... if you release an album everyone gets excited and then forgets about it, and I think that is a part of the Gen Y mentality, the Internet, that if you want it right now you can YouTube it [...] they want it quick and now" (I6).*

Indicating that increasing availability of production technology has allowed self-produced material to be produced quickly, and at reasonable quality, a participant also commented that demos can now sound like a *"produced product" (I1)*.

The importance of the overseas and mainstream markets for Australian artists was also emphasised. Noting the small size of the domestic market, a participant suggested that *"to actually make money and be successful, you've got to connect with that mainstream at some point" (I3)*. Overseas markets were identified as having the facility to *"break a career as an artist or songwriter" (I6)*. Similarly, it was noted that:

*"If you have a minor hit in another territory, Europe or America, [it] can mean financial success and financial independence. Here unfortunately in Australia, we've got a small populace and a large country" (I12).*

In order to transition into overseas markets, the role of the Internet was highlighted in *"enabling bands to build a fanbase overseas before they go [touring]"* (I6); international collaborations in songwriting were viewed as having potential and mutual benefits (I2). Commenting on the '360 model' for artists, where sync (particularly advertising on television) represents *"the bulk of the publishing business in Australia"* (I2), the increasing viability of sync as an avenue for financial success was identified.

A critical part of successful online engagement is identity management, in terms of maintaining a consistent visual image and brand. Successful branding was viewed as being crucial to artistic identity. Strategies for branding included profile pictures, cover artwork, merchandising, typeface and logo, with one participant stating that *"... understanding what you look like visually, along with the audio, is a big part of who you are"* (I1). From an artist's perspective, image and brand was also seen to involve active engagement in social media:

*"... a lot of it has become very visual as well, the attention span is becoming shorter and shorter ... Instagram is the number one social at the moment, putting photos up on Tumblr, I try and engage myself in these"* (A2).

Several participants underlined the importance of recognising both professional and personal presence online: *"There's very little disconnect between [an artist's] personal Facebook page and their band Facebook page"* (I11). *"A lot of people don't realise that, particularly with the new Facebook privacy setting ... they own everything you said for the last four years now"* (I3).

## 5 Conclusion

Achieving 'success' within the Australian music industries is contingent on a variety of factors. In particular, contemporary markers of success are not only built on musical ability, but also more explicitly on business acumen and strategic planning. Effective building of online presence in

order to secure a dedicated fanbase, successfully achieving short-term projects through crowdfunding, and successfully being 'unearthed' through limited airplay can all be viewed as contemporary markers of artist success. Although the more traditional benchmarks of financial success and peer recognition are undoubtedly still applicable, there are many intermediary stages of contemporary success that are needed in order to achieve end goals. However, intermediary successes can also be considered 'successes' in their own right. Certainly, the research findings identify that attaining success often leads to further success, and that post-intermediary successes may be more weighted to the traditional notions of success in terms of revenue and recognition. Ultimately though, success can be viewed as "*whatever you want it to be*" (I14); for many contemporary artists, success may simply be 'satisfaction' in musical achievements.

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