Dear Chair,

Green Music Australia welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in response to the Interim Emissions Reductions Targets for Victoria Issues Paper.

Green Music Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that works with musicians, music venues and festivals to reduce the carbon footprint and overall environmental impact of the music industry. Through this, we aim to increase consciousness around the threats climate change poses and inspire a shift to more sustainable practices in musicians and festival goers.

However, as the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report articulated, we are currently on a path to accelerating dangerous and catastrophic climate change. Steering us away from this will take rapid and deep reductions in emissions.

This current trajectory threatens the existence of the music festival industry in its entirety. This industry is currently a substantial source of income and tourism for Victoria, with 350 festivals featuring live music occurring in the state annually. These festivals provide essential opportunities to showcase local and international creativity, as well as Victorian produce and performers. They also help regional and rural communities thrive by boosting income and publicity, as well as building pride in the communities that host such events.

As these festivals tend to be primarily outdoors, they are increasingly threatened by unpredictable weather conditions and natural disasters such as bushfires, which are already increasing in intensity and frequency due to climate change. A recent example is the 2015 Falls Festival, which had to be relocated from its usual location at Lorne due to a 2,200-hectare bushfire burning along the Great Ocean Road.

Heatwaves, another climate impact increasing in extremity, are another major threat to music festivals. A new group working to better understand the impacts of heatwaves, under the guidance of the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), found that in intense heat people are likely to drink more alcohol. This results in increased instances of violence and injury, requiring a higher police presence for the large crowds at festivals.

The nature of music festivals makes them especially vulnerable to climate impacts, as they are reliant on predictable weather conditions for a few days a year. Enormous amounts of time and money are invested into them and one year thrown into disarray by weather or natural disaster can affect the future viability of the festival.
Additionally, the threat that climate change poses to festivals directly affects the lives of music makers and music consumers. Festivals are a crucial source of income for professional musicians, and help to sustain what is for most artists a precarious career. Without festivals the very viability of the entire sector would be undermined.

The future of music festivals is therefore highly dependent on the action we take now to secure a safe climate and limit global warming to below 1.5°C. However, the Federal Coalition’s failure to act on climate means Australia’s emissions are increasing. Their inaction leaves Victorian communities exposed to intensifying impacts such as heatwaves, droughts, bushfires, extreme weather events, and rising sea levels.

Leadership from Victoria is needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C to avoid what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change say will be “catastrophic” impacts.

The Andrews Labor government can show this leadership by setting Emissions Reduction Targets that get Victoria to zero emissions as soon as possible.

The Combet Report identifies a target of at least 43 percent below 2005 levels by 2025 as necessary to give us any chance of meeting the 1.5°C challenge.

A heavier lift up front of a 57 percent reduction by 2025 and 75 percent by 2030 would provide Victoria with the carbon budget needed to meet the 1.5°C challenge by 2050—the legislated deadline for zero-net emissions in the state.

With climate impacts occurring much faster than scientists predicted it is essential to do the hard work now. Victoria cannot afford to kick the can down the road.

Victoria’s international reputation as a state with a thriving music scene is crucial to its economic prosperity, tourism and identity. Catastrophic climate change threatens to shut this industry down without urgent action now. Green Music Australia therefore urges the Andrews government to show leadership by delivering emissions targets that meet the 1.5°C challenge.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Berish Bilander.