

ROYALTY-FREE MUSIC

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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Royalty-Free and PPCA-free

The terms ‘royalty-free’ music and ‘PPCA-free’ music can mean lots of different things and they don’t always mean that you don’t need a OneMusic Australia licence. You might also have heard the term ‘Public Domain’ – we’ll cover this too.

We’ve provided more details below, but you can always chat to us on the phone on 1300 162 162, through [live chat](#) or by [email](#).

The low-down on royalty-free music and PPCA-free music

When OneMusic Australia licenses a business to play our music, we send almost all the money we collect for that licence back to music creators, including the songwriters and recording artists. These are called “royalties”.

Unlike OneMusic Australia’s music, royalty-free music is music where ongoing “royalties” are not being paid out to music creators even when someone pays to use that music in their business. The vast majority of the world’s commercially released music is not “royalty-free”.

Not all royalty-free is really royalty-free

Not all music that is called ‘royalty-free’ music is the same. Sometimes it could mean that just the recording is ‘royalty free’ and that the underlying written songs still require an ongoing payment to the creators.

A recording may be ‘royalty-free’ because the supplier already has the permission from the record label that owns the recording, or it could be that the supplier has themselves arranged for a ‘sound-a-like’ recording to be made (sometimes this is called ‘PPCA-free’).

Unfortunately, in our experience, often what is sometimes called ‘royalty-free’ music is in fact not entirely ‘free’ from the payment of ongoing royalties and that you may still require a licence from OneMusic Australia.

If you are not sure if the music you want to use will require a OneMusic Australia licence, please feel free to [contact us](#).

What if I want to use OneMusic Australia’s music as well as some royalty-free music?

The good news is that OneMusic Australia’s licences cover the vast majority of commercially available music from around the world and allow you to play our music as much (or as little) as you like, depending on the details of your licence cover.

Many of our licences have options so you can tailor them to your specific uses. For example, if you are using legitimate ‘royalty-free’ telephone music on hold as well as our music as background music, you can take out a OneMusic Australia licence to cover off only on the use of our music as background music.

Music out of Copyright (in the Public Domain)

A song is considered in the ‘Public Domain’ (that is, no longer protected by copyright) if the composer or arranger died more than 70 years ago. However, if a new arrangement of a piece of music is created, then the clock starts once again for this arrangement and is again protected by copyright for 70 years from the date of the arranger’s death.

The same goes for a sound recording (that is, the recording of a song). The recording is protected by copyright for 70 years from the date it was created or first commercially released, whichever is later. If an old song is re-recorded, then that re-recording is protected by copyright for **another** 70 years from the date it was created or first released, and so on.

This means that, even if the *song* is out of copyright, the *recording* of that song is likely to still be protected and would likely require a licence from OneMusic Australia or from the sound recording copyright owner directly.

We have [loads of information](#) about the power of our music in a wide variety of businesses, so have a look around our resources.

Why use OneMusic Australia's music?

- If you want access to the largest possible music collection, the OneMusic licence provides the easiest and most cost effective way to access the vast majority of the world's repertoire of music.
- The OneMusic collection of songs (also called repertoire) is the choice for 140,000 businesses across the country.
- 87% of people believe that musicians should be paid for their work just like anyone else¹. 'What can you do as a consumer to support a living wage for artists? Putting a little thought into how you pay for art is a start.'²
- Royalty-free and PPCA-free music is a fraction of the size of the music available globally. It does not include the popular music that your customers know and love. In a 2014 study conducted in the UK a massive 98% of UK retail business preferred commercially available music (such as the music represented by OneMusic) over royalty-free music.
- "The more we like a song, the more our brains are flooded with thrills... Brain imaging studies show that our favourite songs stimulate the brain's pleasure circuit."³
- In the fitness world, if a client prefers the music you've chosen, their motivation will jump and they'll notice their 'hard yakka' less.⁴

"It costs almost \$200,000 to compose and record a full ... CD ... Most of the royalty-free houses pay about \$500 per track to the producer. That is about 4% of the budget... you can definitely tell the difference between original and royalty-free music."⁵

Of the thousands of global suppliers who market themselves as royalty-free music suppliers, there are only around 30 OneMusic Australia can verify as legitimately having only royalty-free music on offer.

1 Leger research conducted among 1,500 Canadians (2015).

2 ArtsHub, 15 August 2019

3 Stern, M.J (2014). Slate

4 Ballmann, C. G., Maynard, D. J., Lafoon, Z.N., Marshall, M. R., Williams, T. D., Rogers, R. R. (2019) Sports Effects of Listening to Preferred versus Non-Preferred Music on Repeated Wingate Anaerobic Test Performance. Sports (Basel)

5 Media Music Now, UK. <https://blog.mediamusicnow.co.uk/2009/05/15/5-reasons-royalty-free-music-crappy-part-helping-change/>

APRA AMCOS is the trading name of APRA (Australasian Performing Right Association) and AMCOS (Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society). APRA AMCOS grants licences for the live performance, broadcast, communication, public playing and reproduction of its members' musical works. APRA AMCOS then distributes the net licence fees collected to its 103,000+ songwriter, composer and music publisher members and affiliated societies worldwide.

PPCA (Phonographic Performance Company of Australia Ltd) grants licences for the broadcast, communication or public playing of recorded music (such as CDs, records and digital downloads or streams) and music videos. PPCA then distributes the net licence fees collected to its licensors (generally record labels) and registered recording artists.

This information sheet is a guide only. Refer to the licence for full terms and conditions.