



2 April 2019

To the Assessment Panel, Australia Council

I'm writing to lobby passionately for your support of the Woodford Folk Festival and the ground breaking work that they do as an arts organisation. I've been attending the festival since I was a child. The festival inspired me to become a musician then gave me opportunities to hone my craft by playing shows and taking workshops.

Woodfordia Inc has been hugely helpful and supportive of my career from the very early days. The very first public gigs I ever played were at the Woodford Folk Festival. I was in my late teens and I signed up for chalkboard gigs every day. The year after, Woodford programmed me in their Chrysalis series (Emerging Artist programme) and the year after that, I was on the main programme.

This level of care and support really helped my fan base grow. It proved to be a huge boost to my career, and I have made many lifelong fans as a direct result of the festival. I also made some lasting connections with other musicians at the festival which have led to great musical collaborations and other opportunities. The importance of the festival's impact on my career cannot be overstated.

Whenever I'm asked in interviews to name my favourite concert, I struggle to go beyond concerts I've seen at Woodford. From some of the best international bands in the world to brilliant (and sometimes underrated) local artists, I am consistently surprised, moved and delighted by the line-up. Audiences and artists around the world rave about what a brilliant and unique event the Woodford Folk Festival is. In a tough market for festivals, Woodford gets better every year.

Many other artist's careers have been boosted by the Woodford Folk Festival – John Butler, Katie Noonan, Emma Louise and The Waifs among others. Countless artists have had transformative experiences at Woodford. The high standard of artistry at the festival, together with its very special sense of community, regularly leads to life-changing collaborations and opportunities for artists.

Woodford was crucial to the development of my art and career early on, and the festival has continued to nurture both in the 20+ years I have been attending.

I have played at many festivals all around the world, and none is as special to me as Woodford. As well as the huge scale of the festival, the team behind it share a distinctive and innovative vision about the arts and what a festival could be.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kate Miller-Heidke