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## Local music on radio hits highest peak since records began

Local music broke several records for radio airplay and chart placings in 2020 – in spite of the many challenges the industry faced due to the pandemic, according to NZ On Air, the Radio Broadcasters Association and Recorded Music NZ.

For the first time since 2005, commercial radio networks and stations playing contemporary New Zealand music collectively played more than 20% local music content in the calendar year. The final figure for New Zealand music airplay on commercial radio in 2020 of 20.95% surpasses the previous highest figure achieved in 2005 of 20.77%.

Led by a large increase in local music airplay across the Pop, Dance, Adult Contemporary and Beats R&B format stations, cracking 20% has been the culmination of a steady trend of increasing local airplay since a low ebb in 2016/17.

According to NZ On Air's Head of Music David Ridler the strength and breadth of the great local music repertoire in 2020 has been a key factor in the success.

*"There have been big local and global successes like BENEE, Jawsh685, Six60 and Drax Project, astonishing success locally for artists like L.A.B., and a wide range of other local acts who have achieved radio airplay and chart placings. Despite 2020 being a hugely challenging year it was very encouraging to see local audiences*

*loving local hits,” said Mr Ridler.*

*Damian Vaughan, Chief Executive of Recorded Music NZ noted, “It is extremely satisfying to see the number of NZ artists increasing their presence across commercial radio. Its testament to our talented artists and the breadth of songs being written and produced locally, as well as the strong relationships between the music and radio sectors, all with a shared goal to champion music from Aotearoa.”*

*Jana Rangooni, Chief Executive of the Radio Broadcasters’ Association (RBA) added, “Commercial radio in New Zealand has always maintained that achieving the code is about a range of artists and songs that are loved by listeners and become the hits they want to hear. It’s so great to see the depth of talent in New Zealand today producing such good music and it’s not surprising Kiwis want to hear more and more of it.”*

According to Paul Kennedy from Radioscope/Recorded Music NZ (which manages all airplay data) the 20.95% achievement is the highest quantity of New Zealand music on air in a calendar year since monitoring began. He says, *“That’s up from 18.26% in 2019 and 16.61% in 2018, and a long way from the 5% range when these stats first began to be kept in the late ‘90s.”*

The data relates exclusively to airplay on commercial radio and does not include music played on public, student and iwi radio – all of which are tracked separately, and also had exceptionally strong local content results in 2020.

Other records broken in 2020 by local music include:

- More than 2 billion impacts by local songs. An impact is defined as the total number of listeners who were tuned to a particular station at the time a Kiwi song was played, as measured by GfK. It means that on 2 billion occasions a New Zealander heard a New Zealand song being played on the radio.
  - For the first time near the end of 2020, weekly impacts exceeded 50 million in a 7-day period.
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- In 2020, the #1 spot on the weekly RadioScope100 Airplay was held by a local song on 41 occasions.
- For 34-weeks in a row an NZ song held the #1 position – eight different songs consecutively held the spot – songs by DRAX Project, Six60 (four tracks), L.A.B., Jawsh 685 and Stan Walker.

Going into 2021, NZ On Air says new government investment in music will help to take NZ music's profile with local audiences to ever greater heights in years to come.

NZ On Air was allocated two years of [additional Music funding](#) in the Arts Recovery package in May 2020. The extra funding is boosting NZ On Air's investments in multi-single Projects, individual Singles, and rounds focusing on Development, Pasifika artists, Te Reo Māori waiata (with Te Māngai Pāho) and Children's Music.

NZ On Air funds and promotes a variety of contemporary popular NZ music songs and projects to ensure audiences in Aotearoa can discover and enjoy a wide range of homegrown music. NZ On Air's music funding and promotional support helps to provide wider content choices for both mainstream and targeted New Zealand audiences.

**Editor's note:**

New Zealand has a Voluntary Music Code that was introduced by the commercial radio industry in 2002 when commercial radio stations played less than 10% New Zealand music. It sets a target for New Zealand commercial radio stations to play 20% New Zealand Music.

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