



FIRST NATIONS

TAX, BUSINESS & LEGAL

# Registering A Business

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This resource provides a step-by-step guide to registering a business, covering structure, naming, tax obligations, and legal basics to help artists get set up properly.

## A Step By Step Guide to Registering Your Business

### 1. Choose your business structure

Decide if you will operate as a sole trader, a partnership, or a company. Deciding this might feel complex, try setting out why you are starting a business, and then use this tool to help you get clarity on what structure will suit. Note - this choice impacts your taxes, liability for debts raised by the business, and operating rules. If you're unsure, educate yourself, and we recommend that you seek advice from an accountant, or book a consult with a lawyer before taking action.

### 2. Prepare for your ABN application and apply

Gather your key documents, including your Tax File Number (TFN) and proof of identity. Go to the Australian Business Register (ABR) website and complete the free online application. An ABN is essential for operating a business, issuing invoices to get paid, and sometimes - applying for grants.

### 3. Check your business name availability

If you plan to use a name other than your own legal name, use the search tool on the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) website to see if it's available.

### 4. Register your business name

Once you have your ABN, officially register your chosen business name through the ABR service. This protects your brand identity. Then you are ready to secure your website domain name and social media handles.

### 5. Understand your tax obligations

Determine if you need to register for GST, which is mandatory if you generate more than \$75,000 in a financial year. You will also need to keep good records of all your income and expenses for your annual tax return, see our guide on business processes.

### 6. Sort out legal, financial, and ATO compliance basics

Set your business backend set up with template written contracts for all professional work, understand your copyright protections, and manage any personal data you collect responsibly. Reach out to Artists in the Black to get general advice on contracts or upskill yourself with targeted research on money and compliance matters. You may also like to read about Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property and Music Copyright, so you understand how to protect your work, respect community knowledge, and build strong foundations from the start.

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## 7. Look into licences and permits

Check with your local council to see if you need any special permits for activities like live performances or public events. You can also use [Australian Business Licence and Information Service \(ABLIS\)](#) tool to gain insight into who you might need to talk to about permits.

### **Where to find more information and get advice**

Finance & Business Structure Workshops: [First Nations Foundation](#)

Generalised Business Workshops: [Indigenous Business Australia](#)

Legal, Contracts, Privacy: [Artists in the Black](#)

Legal, Business Structures Advice: [Jaramer Legal](#)

Accounting and ATO Compliance: [Better Business Advisors](#) (non-Indigenous, music industry experience)

Looking for more resources?  
Find more resources like this  
one at [musicnsw.com/resources](https://musicnsw.com/resources)

MusicNSW works, creates and listens on unceded Aboriginal land across the state. We honour elders past and present and acknowledge all First Nations peoples as the original music makers, storytellers and knowledge holders. Always was, always will be.

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