

**Submission
No 263**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Name: Mr Hugo Hayes

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Hugo Hayes

Parliamentary Enquiry into the Music and Arts Economy in NSW

To whom it may concern,

I am a 25 year old electronic music producer of almost 10 years and a current 3rd year psychology student at Griffith University. Music is in my blood with both my parents playing instruments and my grandmother being the organ player at their local church. Before joining the electronic music scene I performed in bands and ensembles around NSW and QLD and spent many hours in recording studios. My career as an electronic music producer has led me to play all around Australia and the world.

Music provides a place of refuge for almost everyone in hard times both physically and psychologically. It creates a space of comfort, emotion and connection and is hardwired into every aspect of our lives as a human being, as we will even hear melodies or tones in things that are naturally occurring. I've been very lucky to have it as such a massive part of my life and to be able to share all of my emotions with thousands of people. It's gifted me friends from countries like Brazil, Mexico, the US, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Israel and many others who in turn have enabled me to see and experience other cultures. This taught me a lot about cross cultural differences and enabled me to be a much more open minded and accepting person.

Whilst I understand that the lock out laws in Sydney were not an intentional attack on our live performance industry, it saddens me that what was once one of the biggest hubs for Live Music in Australia is now dead and the businesses involved, with it. Although not a part of this inquiry, it's worth noting that similarly the tough actions on the NSW festival scene are having a similar effect, with yet another one of our very well run and beloved boutique festivals (Dragon Dreaming) having to cancel this year. Art does so much for us Psychologically, connecting, entertaining and inspiring people to be creative and different... Different is good! Problems are solved through collaboration with people of alternative perspectives. Yet Sydney's is now lacking that vibrancy for 51 weeks in the year, and I'm sure there'll be bigger social issues developing as a result.

The entire industry is suffering and it's now very visible on the ground. Part of the reason for me going to study psychology was to pursue something that had the potential to provide me with a stable income, something that has not been possible in the music industry now for many years, and provide help for the people who needed it. Part of this transition has been selling off my old instruments and just a week ago I sold my double bass at a significantly reduced price to a struggling Tamworth musician. Having not eaten for 2 days, he travelled all the way to Byron Bay with nothing but a swag and his Centrelink pay check for the next 2 weeks to purchase this instrument as it was the only hope he had of getting some industry-based work. Whilst here he showed us some recordings of his music and his

“Australiana” songs/poems, some of which I believe he said are going in some sort of Australian National History museum. We fed him and put him back on the road but by the time he got back to Tamworth, the gigs he had been promised that weekend had been cancelled. Probably also worth noting that the live performance income is now the only viable source of income for a musician as streaming services have completely killed music sales.

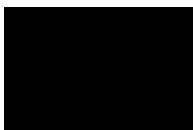
I am also in the process of starting a business to try and create some tools for the live music industry, by connecting industry professionals together and simplifying the process of agreements and finding venues/musicians. In the process of doing market research, I spoke with a lot of Sydney based live music venues about their current situation and previous experiences and many of them quoted hosting live music as being “Charitable”. One larger venue specifically mentioning that they were losing money on hosting events but doing it for the love of it. Ignoring the art aspect, there are many businesses built around this industry who are now suffering as a result and an important role of the Government (as far as I’m aware) is to help businesses flourish in Australia, as they improve every aspect of Australian life. I’m not aware of any businesses that have had a win from this situation...

We as an industry understand that things needed to change in Sydney to reduce the violence. We know that measures need to be put in place for the protection of the people, because we are those people too... The people that are injured or die on the streets or at festivals are often our closest friends or even family. These measures need to be built constructively, together.

I will never stop writing music, I may just not be able to share it with any others than my immediate friends and family in the future and when this becomes the norm, we will, like Sydney is, be living in a very grey and dull world.

I hope to see this inquiry lead to collaborative solutions for the protection and support of both the industry and the people.

Cheers,



Hugo Hayes

