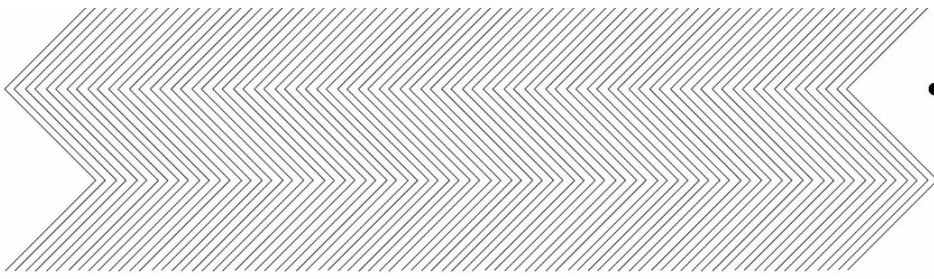


**Submission  
No 762**

## **SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY**

**Organisation:** FBi Radio

**Date Received:** 4 July 2019



# FBI RADIO

FBI Radio | PO Box 1962, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012  
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03 July 2019

To The Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy,

## RE: INQUIRY INTO SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Thank you for opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. FBI Radio is an independent, not-for-profit community broadcaster and is a unique highlight of the Sydney landscape as the only radio station dedicated to the emerging music, arts and culture of Sydney. Our mission is to shape and amplify local independent culture. Through a combination of broadcast content, cultural events and training and development initiatives, FBI Radio is a leading cultural incubator for Australia's next generation of creative talent.

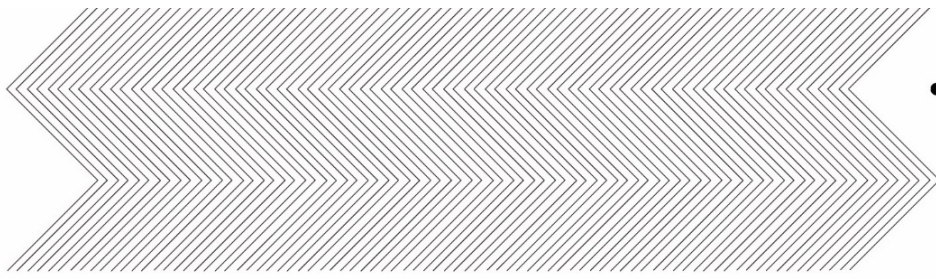
### ABOUT FBI RADIO

As the only radio station dedicated to the emerging music, arts and culture of Sydney, FBI Radio plays 50% Australian music, with half of that from Sydney, and provides a platform for musicians, artists and creators to reach broad audiences. FBI 94.5FM has been on air since 2003 and continues to broadcast across Greater Sydney to over half a million listeners monthly.

Beyond broadcast, FBI Radio has developed a range of projects to enhance Sydney's vibrancy through cultural participation and creative development opportunities. This includes Dance Class, a mentoring and training initiative designed to encourage greater participation of young women in electronic music, as well as Tracks, a professional development program and live music showcase building artists and contemporary music audiences in Western Sydney. The annual FBI Sydney Music, Arts & Culture Awards exist to recognise and celebrate emerging local talent, putting Sydney artists, musicians, curators and venues, many in early stages of their career, in front of FBI Radio's broad audience.

### SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY & THE IMPACTS OF EXISTING REGULATION

Vibrant, safe and viable culture is a legitimate public interest and the opportunity to enhance Sydney's night time economy is an opportunity to encourage cultural participation. Cultural participation isn't just at the heart of FBI Radio's mission, it also builds community, however existing regulation makes this increasingly difficult.



The Liquor Amendment Act 2014 continues to create a regulatory environment that builds barriers to artistic expression, diversity and opportunity. A vibrant city is one that balances tensions between culture and regulation, managing to maintain space for cultural and social activity. Through the lockout laws, this has balance shifted. As acknowledged in 2018's inquiry into the music and arts economy in New South Wales, we are amidst a music venue crisis with 176 venues having closed their doors in four years.<sup>1</sup> This has dramatically impacted Sydney's live music scene, the city's cultural vibrancy and Sydney's reputation on a national and international stage.

As an integral part of Sydney's artistic ecosystem, FBI Radio has seen the impacts of the current regulatory arrangements first hand. As the largest youth community broadcaster in the country, we foster direct relationships with venues, promoters, festivals and other cultural organisations.

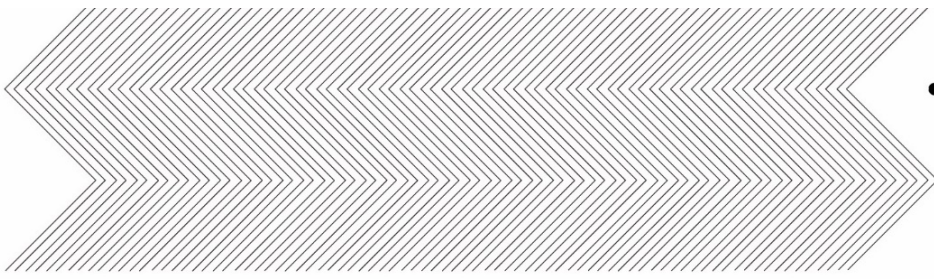
FBI Radio also nurtures relationships with musicians through initiatives including Music Open Day. Each month, the local music community is invited to meet the FBI's Music Team and submit new music for potential airplay. A troubling and recurring narrative is presented during these sessions around the viability of contemporary music as an art form. Emerging musicians lament that Sydney is "dead" or "over", and that making it as a musician now means moving interstate where creativity and cultural participation is valued. More established musicians reveal that past successes would not have been possible in today's climate. Always of note, artists continue to discuss the detrimental impacts of the lockout laws and the shortage of venues and performance opportunities in Sydney. This is echoed by national and international guests visiting, many of who have "heard" that youth and artistic expression has been pushed to the margins in this part of the world. For our 200+ strong volunteer base – made up of musicians, DJs, event producers, bartenders, artist managers, promoters, festival bookers and more – interstate opportunities are increasingly being sought out, not as additional opportunities but rather in place of hometown support for their craft and careers. As a result, the ability to attract and retain talent is increasingly affected.

As a community radio station, FBI Radio's main source of revenue is sponsorship. We also offer modestly priced memberships for listeners, as less than 3% of operational funding is drawn from government grants. Local businesses, most with a focus on music, art, culture and creative communities, help keep the lights on through the paid promotion of their services, events and products via on-air campaigns. Existing regulatory arrangements impact what is already at times a volatile market. In four years, FBI Radio has absorbed a notable loss in the volume of sponsorship campaigns from venues:

- In 2014, FBI Radio has had upwards of 8-10 venues promoting recurring events on a weekly basis via on air sponsorship.
- In 2019, that number of recurring venues is one.

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<sup>1</sup> Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Planning and Environment 2018 Report: The music and arts economy in New South Wales



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In its deliberations, we hope the Committee:

- Recognises the importance of community radio in the creation of initiatives that promote safe cultural participation
- Acknowledges the impacts that existing regulatory arrangements, including Sydney's lockout laws, have had on individuals, businesses and other stakeholders
- Recommends the repeal of Sydney's lockout laws
- Recommends that NSW Government and LGAs partner with community radio to develop collaborative precincts and infrastructure that supports and promotes Sydney's music, art and culture.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this inquiry. If you'd like any more information please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Regards,

Nikki Brogan  
Managing Director  
FBI Radio