

THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN NSW
Questions Taken On Notice

26 MARCH 2018

MusicNSW

Q1.

The CHAIR: *Do you have any evidence suggesting that gaming machines changed the goalposts on the matter of live artists? I imagine one brings you money and the other one you have to pay out, even though it brings you clientele?*

Since speaking at the Public Hearing, we have been seeking evidence to support our suggestion that gaming machines made it difficult for live music in Sydney. The Chair was correct in his assumptions, it's very much an issue of money.

While there is no research specifically on this matter, Shane Homan and Bruce Johnson's "Vanishing Acts: An Inquiry Into the State of Live Popular Music Opportunities in New South Wales" is worth exploring as it looks specifically at the relationship between music programming and poker machines:

"While the media have oversimplified the negative impact of gaming, nonetheless the surveys and the interviews incontrovertibly indicate that the proliferation of poker machines has in many venues displaced live music. The appeal of the 'pokies' to venue management is straightforward: profits. Along with bar sales, gambling is the biggest source of revenue (SC4, SC2). Some venue managers expressed anxiety at the possibility that music might threaten gaming (NC2: 'We have to be careful of music levels near the poker machines—you don't want the pokie players to leave.' See similarly NC1).

But the opposite was never heard, that is: 'We don't want the music audiences to 4. Interviews Vanishing Acts 35 leave because of the pokies'. The recent proliferation of poker machines has thus impacted negatively on the presentation of live music unless the music presented also catered to likely pokie players (NC1: rock audiences are the biggest drinkers and are also likely to play the pokies)."

The entire publication can be viewed here:

["Vanishing Acts: An Inquiry Into the State of Live Popular Music Opportunities in New South Wales"](#)

By Bruce Johnson and Shane Homan, 2003

Other interesting article on this topic:

- ["How removing pokies could revive the live music scene"](#)
HACK, triple J, 8 September, 2017

- [“CBD Exemptions Favour Pokies Over a Culturally Rich Sydney Nightlife”](#)
The Guardian, 4 December, 2015
- [“Melbourne and Sydney's live music scenes are changing, researcher says”](#)
ABC News, 13 Feb, 2015

Excerpt:

“Liquor licences in Sydney could cost \$50,000, she said, while a small Melbourne bar would pay just a few hundred dollars.

"It's absolutely unimaginable to pay \$50,000 a year for a liquor licence and then go 'I might just put some bands on'," Ms Taylor said.

Instead, Sydney licensees looked to poker machines for guaranteed revenue.”

Q2.

The CHAIR: *Why has gaming and the gaming sector not had the same impact on Melbourne as it has in Sydney? That is a question for you to consider.*

There are many reasons as to why Sydney was impacted by gaming in a different way, but much of it boils down to our liquor licensing laws when pokies were introduced, the health of the hotels sector in NSW at the time and cultural differences between Sydney and Melbourne. Clubs had been allowed pokies for several years, and were able to subsidize entertainment with gaming profits. However hotels/pubs were only allowed pokies in 1997, and this introduction was seen as an opportunity to secure profits not delivered by other forms of entertainment. Similarly liquor licenses were incredibly expensive in NSW – up to \$50k per annum, whereas it was much much cheaper in Victoria. The way pubs and hotels were licensed at the time meant that these venues had pressure on them to achieve certain profits.

Q3.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: *I refer to women in the music industry. The industry is very male- dominated in New South Wales and around the country. On notice will you provide the committee with any research about where things are up to on that front or views of what is being done to tackle that?*

There is a lot of great work being done to develop gender parity in the music industry, although it's done on an individual and organizational level, rather than necessarily as a broad industry. With a 75% female Board and 100% female staff, MusicNSW runs professional development programs for young women working in the electronic music industry, as well as more broadly. We also support a program at Parramatta Information and

Cultural Exchange called All Girl Electronic, which is training young school-aged girls how to be producers and beat makers.

MusicNSW is developing a list of programs happening across Australia that are supporting women in music. Some are funded, some are self-run, some are small – but they all count towards progress. [This document can be found here.](#)

There are also nationally significant campaigns like #menomore which sought to share the stories of over 1000 submissions from women in the music industry detailing sexism and harassment. <https://www.theindustryobserver.com.au/me-no-more/>

But the work on gender is not just about parity, it's also about safety. As mentioned in my evidence, there is great work being done in Victoria around sexual harassment in venues with a program developed and funded by the Victorian Government. "The *Sexual Harassment and Assault in Licensed Live Music Venues Pilot Program* will improve the safety of live music venues by training staff and patrons how to identify and respond to sexual harassment and assault. Posters and other materials will be rolled out in venues from late April, with training currently being delivered to staff.

Nine well-known live music venues across Melbourne and regional Victoria, including:

- The Corner Hotel, Richmond
- Howler, Brunswick
- Revolver Upstairs, Prahran
- The Toff in Town, Melbourne CBD
- The Gasometer, Collingwood
- The Croxton Bandroom, Thornbury
- The Chelsea Heights Hotel, Chelsea Heights
- The Workers Club, Geelong
- Karova Lounge, Ballarat

A taskforce made up of government agencies, Victoria Police, academics, licensed venues and the live music industry oversaw the development of the pilot program. The program will run for 12 weeks and be independently evaluated during and post completion."

For more information:

<https://creative.vic.gov.au/news/2018/live-music-industry-bands-together-against-sexual-harassment>