



The Police Association

UPHOLDING OUR RIGHTS SINCE 1917

Your ref: D18/27960

6 September, 2018

The Honourable Paul Green, MLC
Committee Chair
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Green

Re: Inquiry into the Music and Arts Economy in New South Wales – Questions on Notice

We are in receipt of your correspondence dated 17 August, 2018, in which you seek answers to questions regarding the inquiry into the music and arts economy in New South Wales. We are pleased to provide the following in response:

1. The Police Association Victoria (the Association) cannot comment on the success or otherwise of the Live Music Roundtable, as it is not an active participant. Representation on operational matters such as this would be the domain of Victoria Police, itself.
2. The Association does not provide the Committee with any anecdotal evidence suggesting no link between live music and violence, and as a result, cannot provide any research supporting this statement.
3. The Association represents members who regularly oversee the applications for liquor licenses in Victoria. Our members are required to comment on the suitability of licensees and applications and conduct all due diligence required to form a view to recommend or otherwise mount objection on the application. Victoria Police members also have a role in policing licensed premises when they are called to respond to incidences at licensed venues, including those that provide live music, as well as random or structured enforcement of licensed venues. In addition to general patrols that undertake this duty, this work is also performed by Taskforce Razon, a dedicated unit within Victoria Police, as well as four divisional licensing units located across the State.
4. Victoria Police responds to noise complaints made by complainants at all locations in Victoria, including public places affecting habitable places, or those that relate to potential breaches of licensing conditions. It is our understanding that Victoria Police actively provides evidence to assist in the enforcement of those matters, which are attached to licensed premises by the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation.

5. Based on the little information provided in this question, the Association is unable to provide any valuable response.
6. The Association does not have a firm view on lock out laws in Victoria, but notes the current environment in Victoria would not, in our opinion, presently justify the introduction of these processes. We provide the following reasons for this position:
 - a. It is in our opinion, that in the early 1990s, our members regularly confronted alcohol fueled violence within the Melbourne CBD, an issue that gave rise to significant community safety concerns and required a highly targeted policing response. At the time, the demographic of the Melbourne CBD was quite different. The concentration of licensed venues in the Melbourne CBD has shifted, and other areas that have since been developed in the Melbourne entertainment precinct, such as Southbank, Crown Casino and Docklands, now exist and have further developed and extended the entertainment areas frequented by members of the public. This has, in effect, diluted the concentration of people who visit the *Melbourne CBD, itself*, particularly in areas that formerly provided challenges for police and public safety. The Association and its members also note that the nature of venues in Victoria has also changed since this time, with the number of large venues that could accommodate hundreds of patrons diminishing, and appearing to have been replaced by smaller licensed premises. The nature of venues is also shifting owing to initiatives such as the Late-Night Freeze, which, for example, limits the granting of licenses past 1 am to venues that meet specific conditions. All this has had an impact in reducing and displacing alcohol related violence.

We cannot cavil with the interstate opinion that shows that a reduction in late-night trading hours has a direct correlation to reducing incidence of violence. This is why we have guidelines on restricting trading beyond 1 am and targeted monitoring and enforcement on those premises.

- b. Whilst entertainment precincts still require focused and targeted policing efforts to maintain public safety, circumstances, which might have led to the Association considering lock out laws (similar to those experienced in the 1990s) no longer exist. This is not to say that should these situations or circumstance change, that we would not openly consider similar arrangements as a legitimate means of controlling or mediating the harm caused when patrons congregate at high-density licensed premises that are co-located in a small demographic area.

Should you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact me directly on 9468 2600.

Yours sincerely

~~WAYNE GATT~~
Secretary