

Portfolio Committee No 6 - Planning and Environment

Inquiry into the music and arts economy in NSW

Supplementary questions on notice

Newcastle City Council

Supplementary Question 1: What additional assistance could State Government provide to support the agenda you are driving to back music in your area?

The City of Newcastle welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on possible options for State government support in growing the live music and arts economy in Newcastle.

A well planned night-time economy plays a central role in the city's revitalisation as well as exerting a major influence over the visitor and cultural economies of Newcastle and the broader region.

The City of Newcastle is committed to the protection and growth of the live music industry in Newcastle and is preparing a strategic policy suite of documents including the Newcastle After Dark Strategy and the Live Music Strategy.

To assist Council in the delivery of the actions contained within these strategic documents, City of Newcastle requests that the State government undertakes the following actions to contribute to music and arts economic growth:

1. Develop a Strategic Plan for the music and arts economy in NSW

A State-wide strategic plan for music and arts economy growth would ensure that there is multi-agency and industry focus on an agreed set of targets and actions

2. Develop a suite of planning controls to reduce the risk of land use conflict

The existing environmental planning, assessment and protections legislation in NSW needs amendment to reduce the risk of land use conflicts in zones where multiple land uses co-exist e.g. residential and commercial developments in mixed use zones.

Council will consider the use of s149 certificates (officially known as section 10.7(2) zoning certificates under the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979) to manage community perceptions in this regard.

3. Address overlapping regulatory functions

Current non-alignment of liquor licensing and environmental planning and assessment is causing inconsistent decision making around venue development and management.

4. Provide improved noise assessment regulation and guidelines

The current multi-agency approach to noise management in NSW is not delivering consistent outcomes in terms of planning and/or conflict resolution. Noise guidelines need to be revised to reflect variations in background noise in high density multi-use urban zones

compared to residential zones. Noise complaint investigations, under the current legislation are problematic as definitions and boundaries are not clear and unambiguous and multiple agencies are required to work in partnership to bring matters to a resolution. It is recommended that all agencies currently involved in the assessment of neighbourhood noise are brought together to develop a more coherent way of doing business in this area.

5. Create a Night Time Economy unit within State government agencies e.g. NSW Planning and Environment, Create NSW and NSW Industry

The music and arts economy form an integral part of thriving night-time economies. Multiple State and local government agencies play a role in the facilitation and regulation of night-time economies in NSW therefore it is essential that these players be adequately resourced to be aware of the needs of the music and arts industry so that cultural business ventures are encouraged.

6. Create a Music and Arts Development Office

South Australian and Victorian State governments auspice music development office models that provide tangible benefits through the development of collaborative partnerships between artists, industry stakeholders and government agencies.

NSW would benefit from a similar model of proactive collaboration as it would build capacity and industry knowledge in the agencies and organisations that make decisions around live music.

7. Implement the recommendations in the City of Newcastle's submission to the NSW Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority's 2017 Newcastle Conditions review

City of Newcastle's submission to this inquiry made a range of recommendations based on the City's vision for more low impact venues as part of a venue hierarchy model allied with a strong consistent focus on noise management and responsible service of alcohol.

8. Targeted funding for youth music and arts development through NSW Family and Community Services and Create NSW Grants Programs

During the community engagement phase of City of Newcastle's Live Music Strategy it was identified that the provision of youth oriented music and arts rehearsal and development spaces and opportunities were limited.

City of Newcastle owns and/or manages a range of community venues that will be made available for the purposes of youth music development and performance across the Newcastle LGA. It is recommended that the State government provide targeted funding, through existing programs such as Youth Week or the Arts and Cultural Development Program to enable young musicians and technicians to have the opportunity to develop their skills using this funding. City of Newcastle already partners with NSW Family and Community Services in Youth Week event delivery

9. Live Music Venue Liquor licence standard trading across NSW`

Standard trading hours for live music venues using City of Newcastle's proposed venue hierarchy model described in point 7) above would assist in the management of community

expectations when making decisions around where to live as well as providing venues with a business model that offers a less risky return on investment. Plans of management for licensed live music venues need to include clear targets for the measurement and attenuation of noise as well as adherence to duty of care requirements for patrons leaving a venue.

10. Design solutions for urban noise

Improving the acoustic performance of venues and dwellings in urban settings requires stronger collaborations with design faculties of tertiary learning institutions, music industry stakeholders and the development sector. It is recommended that the State government lobby relevant Australian government agencies to facilitate improvements to legislation such as the National Construction Code so that standards for acoustic performance in building materials are given consideration in future amendments to this document.

11. Improved night time transport services

City of Newcastle's Live Music Strategy community engagement results have clearly indicated that the existing public transport delivery model operating in Newcastle is a barrier to participation in the night time economy. It is recommended that the current service delivery model be revised to ensure that there is a more flexible timetabling aligned with venue and precinct operating hours. Further, it is evident that existing transport modes and routes to suburbs are not meeting the needs of those wishing to enjoy live music in the city centre. It is recommended that the State government examines transport alternatives with Keolis Downer and/or other transport providers that delivers customer focussed timetabling allied with emerging technologies such as online communication and ride share platforms.