

**INQUIRY INTO THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

To the committee holding the enquiry into the NSW music industry.

I have been an avid ambassador for music and the music industry my entire life and am deeply concerned, shocked and actually quite surprised at what the NSW Government has been doing over the last five years or so to "help" it's citizens and the economy.

It's impossible to turn a home into a business and yet for some reason, this is what the NSW Government has been trying to do. Instead of fostering an entire community of citizens that work well together they've divided a state in order to make money. What they didn't count on, however, was that this would literally drive people out of the state.

I moved to Sydney five years ago, excited about the prospect of a beautiful new city, a new adventure, a vibrant lifestyle and the many opportunities I might be able to gain from moving. I've lived right in the city centre on Pitt Street, in Potts Point/Kings Cross and now about 20 mins from the city centre by train. Sydney was a bright and beautiful city when I arrived, full of prospects and travellers and a hum of an amazing city with so much to offer. Shortly after I arrived, however, the lockout laws arrived and the city started to fall.

A curfew was placed on the nightlife due to some very unfortunate acts of violence, committed earlier in the evenings. There is no way that the lockout laws in their current state or the state that they were in when they arrived, would have prevented any of the violent tragedies that occurred leading up to the lockout laws, due to the times that they were committed. An entire industry was punished, from the acts of a few individuals. This led to many job losses, not only in the music industry but other industries also. Food outlets, taxi drivers, hospitality staff, security, cleaners, the knock-on effect was huge.

The lockout laws were a band-aid on a massive gaping sore that is the Australian drinking culture. In order to curb violence in Australia, you need to address the root of the problem. It's like trying to fix a leaky tap with a bucket underneath the tap, eventually, that bucket is going to overflow. You might think that reducing the times that people are allowed to drink in NSW in NSW businesses might somehow reduce that problem. However, it doesn't take into account millions of people who enjoy a few drinks and a night out with some music and friends, incident free, all over the world. All the lockout managed to do was to move the violent behaviour to other areas in Sydney that were "somehow" exempt (like the Casino for example).

NSW needs to look to other locations, worldwide, in order to work out a solution that works for NSW. Lockout laws have been trialled in other places in Australia and subsequently removed. Melbourne figured out pretty quickly that lockout laws don't work, meanwhile NSW is still trying to figure it out many years down the track. People are moving interstate because the state doesn't offer them the community and opportunities that it once did. I myself have personally and seriously considered moving interstate because Sydney is now a shell of what it once was. It's only my loved ones that have kept me here. I personally know many people who have physically moved to another part of Australia or even overseas in order to find a place that resonates with them and that they can call home, following on from the lockout laws. They were looking for a place where they still have the opportunity to enjoy music and art and have a job at the same time. Surely that's not too much to ask?

For the past five years, there have been many discussions about what can be done to help Sydney return to what it formerly was. The NSW Government needs to take these into account and act on how to address the problem. Keep Sydney Open, Music NSW, EMC and various others have offered viable solutions to the problems that the current music industry and Sydney community face. Looking to other successful cities, Melbourne, for example, is shall I say, a good place to start. A night mayor would be incredibly useful. Supporting employees in hospitality, security and transport industries. Night trains to help people get home after a night out, free transport could even be considered at this time.

The bigger issue all Australians need to face is just why the drinking culture here, is the way it is. In European cities you can buy alcohol with your fast food, you can drink on the streets and enjoy yourself, yet it doesn't end in violence or unruly behaviour. I don't have a solution to how to fix Australians drinking culture, but in order to avoid larger problems down the line, it needs to be addressed.

NSW isn't a business, its a place where people live. No matter how hard the NSW Government tries to turn it into a business it will always be about people because this is our home. I work in the music industry and I love it. It's tough, and it's taken me 30 odd years to even get a foot in the door, but it's worth it. Music resonates with so many people, from different walks of life, age groups, lifestyles and nationalities. Music is an artform that can connect people purely based on how it makes them feel. For a community to work together, you need to bring them together and work out solutions that don't ostracise entire groups of people or end in people losing their jobs.

Please feel free to contact if you would like for more information, I would like to help in any way that I can.