

**Submission
No 26**

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

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The Lockout Laws, while somewhat understandable at first, have proven to be extremely detrimental to the state of music in New South Wales. The fiascos of events such as the food festival in Circular Quay and the event in the Royal Botanical Gardens were more than just a symbol of how far Sydney has fallen behind culturally; they were essentially a grand preview for both locals and outside observers. The idea of correlation equaling causation is almost never a good argument, but it applies so well to the effects of the Lockout Laws as of late that it simply cannot be reasonably supported, as even the law's original intent of lowering street crime has essentially failed, since assaults have simply carried on in the surrounding areas. The idea of similar laws would be unthinkable in New York and Berlin, two cultural powerhouses, and Melbourne quickly got rid of theirs, and their music scene has remained healthy.

In Sydney, the laws remain draconian, the culture remains sickly and the music remains stifled. The fact that many venues are being sold or shut down just to be replaced by yet another apartment (in a city essentially saturated with them from the CBD to Penrith) simply limits things further. This is not to say that Sydney's musical scene is dead, or too far gone to help. There's still a chance to rectify this matter and help the city's culture bloom, but action must be taken now. We're not at the edge, but it is just visible over the horizon, and we're moving ever closer. The fact that Ivy, perhaps the most known of Sydney nightclubs, will be shutting its doors this year should serve as an imperative reminder that the right decisions must be made, and fast.

At this stage, Sydney is a vampire. On the outside, it's rich, elegant, and beautiful. It's also a soulless being that drains the life of all that enter its domain. The only difference is that vampires are active at night, something that Sydney hasn't been in almost half a decade. Any musician in Sydney (or even Newcastle and Wollongong, who traditionally weren't slouches when it came to music either) may have to resort to leaving their city altogether, as they'll get almost nothing at home. With Sydney's house prices, they won't have much to lose either.

In summary, I implore the state government to realise that Sydney is in cultural dire straits. The idea of essentially being trespassers in the world's largest retirement village is beginning to firmly take root in the eyes of the youth, and this needs to be weeded out for good. The fact that nearby residents have complained about the Opera House, built to help foster Sydneysider culture, is very grim, and simply becoming a symbol for all wrong and an embarrassment to tourists. The tourists only need to see the landmarks once to enjoy the experience. If they can't enjoy any other activities such as going to a club or checking out the local music scene, they won't come back. Sydney's music needs help, and it needs it now.