

**Submission
No 55**

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

Organisation: Yo-Yo Enterprises

Date received: 17 February 2018

Dear Sir/ Madam,
I hope this letter finds you well,

We are a music organisation in Wollongong NSW, our aim is to provide spaces for artists to perform original music live across the Illawarra and beyond as per our mission statement;

The Yo-Yo Mission Statement:

To unearth and create sustainable platforms for artists from all genres of original art. To aid artists in excelling and expanding their own audiences, whilst positioning the artists brand and The Yo-Yo Brands into a global household name. One artist, one genre and one city at a time. Yo-Yo will never be restricted in its mission to introduce new talent, we embracing multicultural diversity.

We work closely with junior artists as we are passionate not only about quality senior artists but also junior development via our SCMA Junior programs in which we introduce young artists to live performances and coach them from areas such as stage presence, studio recording confidence, tuition in music as well as many other aspects as they arise.

We help connect bands to potential band members, record artist's music, book artists into as many affiliated venues as we can source and promote our artists via multiple social media sources.

We run a TV program "Yo-Yo TV" via Facebook in attempt to increase awareness of the local live music scene and an array of other projects that we take on as a case by case scenario. We do this because we believe the live music side of the Industry is in a all-time low and needs some desperate attention and some wise management. We are musicians ourselves and can see the issues the Australian music Industry is facing and the importance of rebuilding local music in our area and beyond.

It's a struggle! However the huge number of original artists our region has is almost uncountable which is promising for the future providing it's nurtured immediately.

The challenges we face are endless, however time and money are generally the biggest obstacles as we donate 1000s of hours to our project and tens of thousands of dollars that I have spent launching the project from purchasing PA equipment through to studio equipment and Instruments and paying the artists when there is shortfalls from a concert crowd attendance.

We are well known and respected in the local music scene for our hard work and commitment and the community has seen and acknowledged the change we are working towards.

Our aim is to become profitable so then we can “seed fund” other projects beneath the YO-YO banner like more workshops for artists, increased junior development and overall expansion with a vision of ensuring we don’t lose the fabric of music, its culturalism and its appeal to the entire community.

I’ve not written a submission before and I’m finding it hard to know where to start to express my passion for what needs to be done and the urgency of working to fix the situation but I will do my best as follows.

Junior Development, We need more music in our schools, we need to introduce musical instruments to our children at an early age and a recorder or a triangle or a tambourine just won’t cut it alone! I’m a single father of three and appalled that neither of my children were introduced to music via their schools until it became/becomes an elective! We are not giving our kids the desire to take music on, we are just sitting back picking up the children that find it themselves or have it introduced to them by family. There will come a time where musician’s numbers are minimal in our state/country, doubled by the electronic computer generated beats that in my opinion don’t represent an instrument. We need to start at the beginning with junior development in the same way our sporting organisations do! We need to be in the schools sparking the interests of our children via workshops and the likes. A couple of teachers in a school that might play a little bit of guitar don’t represent a good music education! We need to do it better! We need this kind of education outsourced to organisations that can supply an education across multiple platforms of music and its genres and then we need to create pathways for those children to pick up an instrument and want to come along and learn it! Venues, we have a big issue here! They just aren’t that interested because it takes people out of their gaming rooms and if the audience is dancing, they consume less alcohol. Venues generally only want soloists or duos; they only want covers of commercial music and they definitely don’t like turning the TV off whilst that’s going on! The iconic Australian pub rock scene of the 80’s was killed by gaming, if you don’t believe me look into the time stamps of our industries demise! Pubs should be forced to promote original live music based off their gaming revenue/turn over! Cover bands are nice, but they are not an answer! We need spaces for original music of all genres to be displayed. (Try booking a quality 40 piece orchestra made of people aged 18-24 that perform quirky original music into a local venue, overcome the fact that none of the

musicians are likely to be paid for their art and will be out of pocket for travel expenses and give me some feedback on what the venue owners response is, I know, I've done it, It's harder said than done) This need to change and the only way it will is if venues are pushed into contributing to the culture and its community! Most Australian pubs don't even own a PA system anymore! We do our own sound but if we were to charge it would mean the band wouldn't be getting paid and it's not uncommon for us to be running sound at multiple venues at the same time meaning we needed to purchase multiple PA systems on the basis that the venues don't have PA systems to run live music, why? Because they are more interested in gaming! They need educating and they need to be pressured.

Artists. We don't have an issue here just yet however; there will be an issue here in about a decade if we don't get to the schools! It's fair to say that if someone takes up rugby league for the first time when he is attending university he's not likely to play at the NRL level, music is not indifferent! We can't expect to have a global presence in the music industry if we are waiting and hoping a young university student decides to get some piano lessons, if we do (like we are currently doing) that student will never make it in the industry, they will have missed the train and we will have missed the train as a result of not finding that student earlier. Today's artists have learnt to deal with lack of income and lack of venues but I fear tomorrow's artists won't have the same desire to do so! Artists need more support! When we book an artist into one of our venues we run a gate/door we man the gate/door, we give them 100% of the funds, we provide sound engineers free of charge! We provide PA systems free of charge, we supply microphones, leads everything from start to finish! We help promote their performance, we teach them how to promote themselves and we nurture them through the whole process and there needs to be more organisations doing what we are doing because venues either can't do it or won't do it and artists don't have the recourses to do, they are musicians they turn up with instruments and 95% wouldn't know how to set up a PA system or dial in a sound at a desk let alone expect them to run the door! Artists need to be supported better! The way we do! But there aren't enough organisations like ours that work in the grass roots to make a change and that comes down to time and money! Almost every cent I earn from my regular job goes into funding my project! I work 40 hours a week on my regular job and about the same on my project! With zero financial return and that's before we discuss the "seed funding" side of the project! Organisations like mine, we simply need more! Organisations that can promote original live music and music across all genres without being biased to one genre! Organisations that are willing to invest time knowledge and money to

revive the industry knowing full well that there is probably never going to be a financial return. The next step for my project needs to be me focusing full time on it! That can't happen until it generates an income and it won't generate an income until I devote all 80 hours a week to it! I have a very good team of volunteers that are committed to the project but it's the same hurdle, time and money! I have a volunteer building me a web site as we speak so I can online ticket sales! Web sites cost money! They take time to build and need to be updated by people with that training, how long before people start saying "NO" to donating their time to my project! (I'll put the violin away now hahaha) In short we need more projects like mine and we need to start setting them up now! Organisations that can go to schools and do drumming workshops and music workshops and introduce music to the children and "control" the development and oversee the process and breathe life back into the industry!

Radio Stations, the answer is not here! They don't care, they're not interested and unless it helps them sell something they never will! The 20% local content rule is proof! Australian radio stations lead the way in airing local content globally but it has to be commercial music in order for it to make its way to the radio station and none of them help promote emerging artists unless it's something they can sell, you might disagree and look at stations like JJJ. They don't really promote and are biased in their genres! (Worthy of a note is the fine print in the terms when you upload a piece of music to their unearthed, it's actually disgusting that a government funded body is allowed to extort like this) I doubt my two local radio stations even know my project exists! I doubt they would care if they did know and they most certainly wouldn't know the artists we promote! Unless the 20% local content was grass roots content, it has zero impact in fixing the problem! Playing Australian content that was mainstream 10 and 20 years ago defeats the purpose of forcing them to play local content at all, in summary Radio Stations have no idea about music, they sell advertising and hopefully our industry outlasts theirs as the internet has impacted them as well!

TV Stations, Bring back Countdown! Every channel should have a version of Countdown and make it grass roots!

Support for programs that work towards the music industry being representative of NSW people and the best way you could do this is support and fund projects like mine and help these organisations seed fund projects within the project have the projects grow deep roots into our communities and help these organisations become financial over the start-up duration!

Organisations like mine know the local climate, we know the market, we know the artists we know the venues, we know the schools and we know how to fix the problem, but when your robbing “Peter to pay Paul” so to speak because every cent goes back to making it work, it becomes a slow agonising process. You could help speed it up! If every community had an organisation like ours and the state government funded them to become financial enough to create more of their own revenue to grow and invest back into project after project after project within the community, from junior development thru to work shops, engaging and establishing clubs and associations within the community under the one umbrella so as they can be closely coached and monitored and have them promoting all aspects of the arts from poetry through to heavy metal music they we do then the state would have a much better arts culture and would be able to see where the money is flowing via one organisation against handing out funds directly to multiple individuals. Have organisations like ours working towards fixing the problems.

I would be happy to share with you our model should you be interested and help set up other organisation like mine around the state.

You can't download a live music experience, let's see to it that future NSW generations have the recourses to recognise this into the future, unless we start now Australia's music culture will be a memory and a nation without music is a nation without culture!

Seed funding a network is the answer to the problem!

Adam Dawson

The Yo-Yo Enterprises