

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I am a DJ, singer, music blogger and electronic music producer, and am making plans to run a club night in Sydney.

There are so many talented artists in my town and in my state, which is why I've wanted to start my own night to be able to showcase them. Personally I am involved and invested in the electronic music community but love the camaraderie of live bands and acts in the city. The interconnectedness and mateship between the scenes and in every facet of the industry, from the sound techs to the bookers to the acts to the punters, is palpable.

Regardless of genre, all music scenes have been effected by the introduction of the Lockout Laws. The restrictions have reverberated around the country and have demolished our international reputation for our music culture.

Just off the top of my head here are some music related issues following the introduction of the lockout laws:

They put pressure on venues to create more revenue due to shorter opening times and restricted alcohol selling periods. This causes prices of drinks to rise and people who run venues and events to not take chances on artists and ideas that push the envelope and ultimate could shift our creative culture. A lot of the time this means trusting their own inner circle who are, a lot of the time, white male performers; reducing the visibility of women, POC and queer voices in the scene.

Punters then feel less inclined to go out in the first place. Pre-lockouts there were multiple choices for events to attend and opportunity to hit them all in a single night due to less restrictions. Punters could stay out longer, support more events and acts and spend more money at each of these venues. Now, the time restrictions on lockouts, increased prices for entry and alcohol to make up for lost revenue and finite public transport hours mean people go to a single club and leave early if they go out at all. People moving away from the live music scene will cause it to completely dry up and what's left of the night time economy to crumble.

The freeze on liquor licences alongside the closing of venues due to lack of revenue is slowly lowering the count of reliable spaces for music events featuring local or international acts to perform at. The closing of venues such as The Flinders Hotel, Good God Small Club, Midnight Shift and The Ivy have seen many punters and artists lose faith in the town's cultural impact.

Cutting of opening hours means less acts get the chance to cut their teeth in a live setting and start the road to success. Acts like Flight Facilities, Nina Las Vegas and Peking Duk all started in smaller venues in small slots and are now some of the biggest names in the Australian and international music scene.

The restrictions push a lot of the electronic music scene to the fringes, a lot of my friends in the music industries have moved out of our state entirely to work in more hospitable local scenes. Some creatives that have stayed have started warehouse parties that have to work outside the law to be able to function at all, potentially at the risk of punters.

Along with the impact of the Lockout Laws, on the whole, Australia is lacking in a clear cultural identity. The Sydney scene did seem to be growing to be a part of that but has been severely effected by this legislation. Even at a statewide and national level, mainstream music culture a lot of the time feels imported and not at all tangible to an Australian audience.

Revisiting legislation such as Keating's "Creative Nation" policy could push Australian cultural contributions into the national and international spotlight. Valuing of creative contributions by the government would push even more people into this sector, and spark a creative boom for the nation. This could be achieved by funding more musicians in the public sphere in the pop music charts, causing a trickle down of influence locally and internationally. It could be achieved by providing grants and opportunities for relatively unknown artists, events, music labels and festivals to start something new and amazing. It could be achieved by linking up with schools and pushing for more real world applicable music education, and opening up live music to a younger audience by highlighting all ages shows and venues. It would most definitely be achieved by providing opportunities to those who are not usually afforded them and promoting diversity in the industry, like women and GNC artists, creatives of colour, musicians in outer metro and rural areas and artists with disabilities. In the end all of these strategies would be to empower as many people as possible to have access to music and

inspire them to get creating and contributing.

So basically go easy on the Lockout Laws, value the contributions of artists and collectives already pushing the culture and make music more accessible for more Australians.