

**Submission  
No 137**

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

**Name:** Mr Mark Lucas

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## **Submission to the Enquiry into Music and Arts Economy In NSW**

My name is Mark Lucas, I am an inner west resident, singer-songwriter/ recording and performing artist of some 40 years experience, and former local venue operator at Petersham Bowling Club, where I instigated the live music program & was volunteer President for 5 years. I am currently booker and live music curator at Staves Brewery in Glebe.

Also as one of the original architects and former General Manager of local arts hub, the Canal Road Film Centre in Leichhardt (home to the majority of NSW film industry infrastructure), I have experienced first-hand the cultural and community value of creative arts cluster groups & have become keenly aware of the importance of maintaining an environment where not only creative ventures thrive but also opportunities for local employment are maintained.

My experience with the success of the community and arts led recovery at Petersham bowlo (a struggling proudly pokie-free club until a combination of live music and craft beer turned the tables), is a clear indication of the benefits to be derived from nurturing the sector.

When property developers are eying off any vacant and light industrial space that they can get their hands on, we are in danger of seeing our communities reduced to soulless dormitory suburbs, as well as experiencing a corresponding loss of significant industrial heritage. Once the essential balance of the creative and the commercial is gone it is very hard to re-establish.

Meanwhile in Sydney city the lock-outs have effectively destroyed live music culture and changed the face of the entertainment landscape, and not for the better. With will and commitment this damage could be reversed. Compared to Melbourne, for example, Sydney is in grave danger of becoming a stagnant cultural backwater with a night-time economy that is shrinking.

The benefits are manifold- our creative arts, our stories, our songs have the power to educate and preserve, to heal and help carry us forward, allowing to us examine ourselves and so find our place in the world, notwithstanding the fact that the Sydney live music economy alone is worth in excess of 300 million dollars.

Other significant challenges face musicians doing their best to establish / consolidate their careers. Currently there is a marked lack of support for local artists from mainstream radio and, with Radio National and the ABC dramatically reducing their music components, there is less opportunity for independent artists to be heard outside of community radio. There is good reason why Australian charts feature few locals and airplay is dominated by overseas; we desperately need an effective quota system to support this sector.

The grants process could also stand some review, certainly for venues, as most small rooms cannot afford the cost of putting cash up front in order to qualify for matching support.

Thank you