

**Submission
No 143**

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

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I am a freelance graphic designer who has worked directly with the Australian music, festival and touring businesses since 2003. I create all types of material for the music industry and a large portion of that work is creating tour artwork for both Australian and international bands of all sizes. It is in this area I feel I have a unique insight to how the landscape has changed since the Sydney lock out laws came into effect.

Prior to the lock out laws Sydney had a thriving gig scene. There were multiple venues catering to a range of scenes. Since the lock out laws, not only have the number of venues dramatically decreased, there is no longer the variety of capacity for venues. Most often the smaller venues can't afford to stay open which cuts any new emerging bands out of playing. This effectively has wiped out a whole generation of young bands and audiences. The idea of watching live music is no longer considered a normal thing to do. People stop going out because there's nowhere to go, it's too expensive, restrictive and just too hard. It's also impossible to get home because of the limited transport options.

One of the most obvious indicators that the Sydney music scene is dead is the amount of tour posters I've designed over the last couple of years where Melbourne and other city shows sell out, second and third shows are added and also sell out, while Sydney venues first shows are still on sale. Before the lock out laws this NEVER happened. Sydney and Melbourne ticket sales were on par. This is not just for small Australian bands. This is for large international bands, as well as festivals. It could not be clearer to me and anyone involved in the industry that the lockout laws have killed off viewing live music as a pastime Sydney siders enjoy. It has crushed any creative spirit we once had.

I know of numerous people successfully working in, and influential within the music and creative fields who have decided to no longer live in Sydney. I have considered moving myself. Sydney no longer values culture and creative pursuits, instead it seems the state government believes these things should be monetised or funded by corporations. Without places for grassroots creativity to flourish this will never work. Sydney has essentially become a very pretty, bland, retirement village for rich people. My friends from overseas say they have no interest in visiting Sydney, and would much prefer to holiday in Melbourne. I imagine this loss of tourist dollars was not considered when the lockout laws were rushed into existence.

I've watched the Sydney music scene die since the lockouts. People have lost their livelihoods and a city has lost its soul. I desperately suggest these silly and oppressive laws are reversed, hopefully it's not already too late.