

Submission
No 153

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I have lived and worked solely as a professional musician in Sydney for 10 years now. In that time I have also been part of The Jazzgroove Association (now defunct due to lack of funding...another story for another time) in various capacities, from committee member to Artistic Director. As a musician who has spent much time touring interstate and who has also toured overseas, I feel that NSW has one of the poorest live music scenes in the world. A statement that I know doesn't stand alone.

I think the biggest issue facing a flourishing live music scene in Sydney is gambling. When smoking laws changed, pubs spent heavily to make sure that gamblers could smoke in their pokie rooms. Their 'VIP' areas where they are also fed for free and tended on if asked AND areas that generally stay open much later than any other area of the venue. Whilst I understand that it is easier and more efficient to make money from people literally handing it over to you and into a shiny machine, it is reckless and plays on the hope and desires of those who generally are the last to need their money taken from them. But, rent is high and pubs want to make money. So much so, that they will go out of their way to have poker machines available and aforementioned structures of buildings changed to facilitate them. No such thing has happened in regards to nurturing live music. This needs to change. Music is a cultural asset that is undervalued in NSW because business owners don't see enough of a monetary reward in correlation to having live music. To combat this, I would think that government grants to encourage venues to have live music would be of use. Money for sound systems, promotion, paying the musicians...things to begin a step towards a healthier night culture.

Lock out laws have obviously had a huge impact on live music also. I see that this too links with gambling as the few places in the city that don't suffer from these rules are The Star and Barangaroo. Whilst we must try and maintain a healthy and sensible night life culture it doesn't need to be at the detriment to music lovers, venues and musicians. If venues were allowed to stay open later because they had live music, it might encourage more businesses to consider live music as an option. Maybe this could tie in with the aforementioned grant idea. The lock out laws are blanket policies that don't really address the real issue at hand which is toxic masculinity. Something that I feel is fuelled a lot more by sports such as rugby league as opposed to music but, sport makes money and you can gamble on it, so we better keep upgrading and building new stadiums!

The pushing out of young people in the city through cost of rent and also what allowances they are given through the law, has also had a huge impact on the live music scene. Young people...people not settled down with families, with disposable income and interested in seeing living music aren't really given the chance. The city is now full of rich older people who have already had their youth and now want everyone else to be quiet. There's so much more to talk about but I'm running out of time to sit here and write.

Basically we need legislative change that gives businesses financial incentive to move away from poker machines and towards a healthier form of night time entertainment. Lock out laws need to change for venues that have live music to encourage more businesses to implement live music. Music needs to be VALUED in this state, not something that gets talked over in the corner of a pub while people cheer for whatever sport is on the television. For that to change there needs to be a big cultural shift which, will take a while. I believe we have it in us if we allow it. Thanks