

**Submission  
No 157**

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

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One of the biggest differences I've encountered between the Music cultures around the world is ease of access to ALL members of society. Not just to go and see a concert, but to earn a living by performing and enriching the lives of those in communities of all sizes. By being able to earn back the countless dollars spent on learning to play an instrument and have the chance to put the hours of practise into a tangible and stable profession on which to base their life.

As a 28 year old musician in Sydney, I can easily attest to and describe exactly how difficult it is to earn a living as a musician. We all know the vicious cycles of earnings not matching the growth in housing, cost of living etc.

However my submission here is not centered on Sydney. I grew up and started my music education in the country. At the Mitchell Conservatorium in Bathurst.

In that wonderful community music is valued, supported and children sit in awe at concerts and certainly relish any opportunity to watch visiting artists who come to perform. The opportunities are there, until it comes time to talk about a profession. Outside of the capital cities in this country, you cannot earn a full time salary as an orchestral musician. I think that needs to change.

Like any profession, students come to the city to earn a degree in music- but they cannot leave the city with any hopes of a performing job that come with a salary. I would ask, is there not a way to replicate the scholarships on offer to those studying education or medicine? Could there not be government funded orchestras across the state and not just in one place? This would give those musicians completing study an actual choice in where they might choose to live and pursue a life performing for others. Cost of living would be less, it would give a choice of lifestyle to those who don't wish to live week to week in a city that is increasingly expensive to live in. Scholarships could be awarded to musicians who would agree to move to the country and establish the professional orchestras, bands, chamber ensembles and choirs in the country so that across out state music is as much a part of the professional sphere as any other industry.

It would be nice to reach a point in history where "I'm a musician. I perform" wasn't answered with "oh, you mean you get paid to play music?" I am one of the lucky ones on the casual orchestral lists so I do, on occasion get to supplement my teaching income with performing income. But I am one of few for who the stars align and who get to this point. Let's give all members of NSW a chance to benefit from a culture-rich environment closer to home and access to a truly professional standard of music. The benefits of music education, singing, listening, playing an instrument, being part of an ensemble are known. They've been studied and continue to be studied because the results are truly phenomenal.

I'd like to be able to buy a house in the country and perform as a professional musician with a salary- at the moment that is a pipe dream.