

**Submission
No 185**

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

Name: Mr Graham Griffith

Date received: 24 February 2018

I've been involved in music performance for just over 50 years. I'm not formally or classically trained but have acquired knowledge and ability through the Sydney Conservatorium Open Academy and personal practice and performance.

My chosen instrument is the steel guitar and I'm an Australian Hall of Fame member. I've both worked for other musicians and have created work that employs musicians. I have never been able to afford to exclusively play music due to the infrequency of available opportunities. Even today, in retirement, I play and generate work when my niche music group is employed ... which is infrequently.

Unlike big business and government, I cannot afford to market my talents on a scale that generates regular work and, despite generating quality music, there are simply not enough venues available. Before the advent of poker machines in pubs the work situation was much different but now the work has dried up because the publicans have no incentive to employ musicians to attract customers. The publicans received a windfall with no obligation to enrich the social fabric. Poker machines are anti-social. Musicians create a social environment but are undervalued and poorly paid despite having hard earned skills, the level of which, in other professions would be highly regarded and paid.

Music venues have often been under attack because of noise complaints. The recent voting down of the proposed Sydenham Entertainment Precinct by the Inner West Council is an example of a lost opportunity due to the proximity to transport and the fact that it was designed to be in an industrial precinct where the noise issue would have been mitigated due to the zoning.

NSW needs to step forward and encourage Music and the Arts. I have been involved in an Artist in Residence project in 2017 at Campbelltown Arts Centre that led to a spot in the 2018 Sydney Festival and performances in Brisbane at the 2018 Australian Performing Arts Market this last week. Conversely I've often played for no or little remuneration in order to have the skills that led to the higher profile gigs. All musicians and artists need opportunities to explore and expand their talents. This will only happen if welcoming policies leading to an expansion of venues and opportunities occurs.