

**Submission  
No 223**

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

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## Music Industry Submission 2018

Music, particularly, and the arts is at the centre of everything our society does inadvertently as well as blatantly. The lack of support for those trying to make a living as a musician is a huge issue and has many aspects to it. But the biggest comes from the fact that there are no incentives for venues, small business to support an industry which is entirely relevant to them. Therefore, those who partake of the gift of the arts often don't actually realise what they are receiving and how much it costs those creating the music.

In my opinion and observations, society is much more influenced by their elected leaders in their everyday perspective of issues than generally acknowledged. If the govt. endorses the arts in an encompassing, vocal and financially supportive way then the general public have an expectation of the worth of the arts. At this point in time, much of the general public has an extremely low opinion of those who provide their daily entertainment unless there's fame attached – and then the adulation is ridiculous.

I believe that the govt could provide a tax break for those who support music in their establishment. Eg. A café can generally not afford to accommodate musicians unless the musician is prepared to play for virtually nothing. This means that those practicing their chops, have a day job and/or don't mind doing it for a meal or drinks or a few dollars, are competing with the professional musician who is struggling

to get a gig to pay the rent. There is no choice for those in the arts as professionals. If there were, we would all give up and get a day job or go into arts admin. This is, I believe, the crux of the matter. Those who are not driven or who think it's about fame have no understanding of this human necessity possessed by some or it's absolutely necessary place in society.

On a practical level, I have no issue with people learning their craft by this method but if cafes and restaurants were encouraged to book and pay musicians with the incentive of a generous tax break, they would be more inclined to book professional musicians who can actually play. Therefore those getting their experience would be the ones having to work hard to be good enough to get the gig, not the pro's constantly getting sidelined - which contributes to the depression being discussed in the industry at present.

The positive role of the arts in society is a mindset that needs to be set in motion more broadly so that we are slowly given more status for the amount of time, effort and money and soul we contribute.

As a working musician, I support myself with some teaching/playing music as an to aid those on the spectrum, those with dementia and those who are troubled. I've been doing this since a child, unknowingly, for 40 years, I now have 2 sons in the industry trying to get a break through the tight recording and concert platform network but they both use music as a

tool to help others and to support themselves – and in completely diverse ways. Many musicians are using their skills to support people and this needs also to be put in front of the public to encourage support of the industry as a whole.

I believe there needs to be more funding for both the broader performance and education sectors. Not just for the big concert halls and festivals. The smaller venues and festivals are immensely important to the well being of communities.

I also believe that there should be an advertising campaign run by the govt advocating the importance of music and the arts because in my experience, we are often preaching to the converted. Asking people at a concert to support the arts is a waste of breath because they are already there. But we've all had discussions with the public who book musicians for their functions and private parties, and venue managers who tell us how lucky we are that we love what we're doing and therefore expect that we should do it for nothing – or even better, for the publicity.

The other absolutely necessary aspect of this industry is promotional support. The ABC has just had it's music programs cut, AMRAP is in chaos and the industry moguls have all the commercial radio stations tied up so we are all having to be publicists as well as artists. Fair enough, but the in this, we lose the geniuses in our society because they

absolutely can't cope with this side of things. I've worked with some amazing talents who are now pining away for their art, cleaning buildings or just drinking themselves into oblivion. This is tragic. We need a promotional forum which cannot be overtaken by the best networkers, for the talented musicians who in this day are falling through the cracks. Beethoven, Mozart, certainly Brahms et al wouldn't have had a hope. There has to be a way to reach the punters through un - industry controlled media, besides social media.

Radio programs, tv morning program ops, shows. Many of which have existed but have had their funding cut. It's nigh on impossible to cut through commercial bureaucracy. But there is much support for less commercial music. Just look at the development and attendance of the festival circuit where music can be seen and heard.

The Hawkesbury area has an initiative supported by local businesses to promote music. These initiatives could be more widespread with State govt support, encouragement and promotion.

There are people in the community doing the best they can but they need the financial and vocal support of the govt to survive and so does the arts.

Ann Palumbo - musician, teacher, producer, arranger, composer.