

**Submission  
No 212**

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

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**The music and arts economy  
in New South Wales  
Parliament of NSW inquiry**

**Submission by  
Liverpool City Council**

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**LIVERPOOL  
CITY  
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## MUSIC & ARTS ECONOMY IN NSW SUBMISSION

Liverpool City Council (Council) commends the NSW government on instigating a parliamentary inquiry into the music and arts economy in New South Wales. Council firmly believes that government needs to take a regulatory and leadership position to enhance culture and the arts, in all areas of community life, throughout the region. Provided below is Council's response and recommendations to the Terms of Reference of the inquiry.

### Progress on the implementation of the Government response to the NSW Night-Time Economy Roundtable Action Plan

The current actions outlined in the Action Plan are focused on the Sydney CBD, in particular, the lock-out areas. Council notes that issues relating to the Night Time Economy are broader than those caused by the lock-out laws, particularly for areas throughout greater Sydney. As such, Council makes the following recommendations:

- NSW government to investigate where the scope of actions can be expanded to include greater Sydney. For example:
  - Action 2.1: consider ways/means that a master plan can be created for the rest of Sydney, particularly in established city centres like Liverpool which are now recognised as important economic hubs in the Greater Sydney Commission's planning strategies
  - Action 2.2: data should be collected Sydney-wide
  - Action 2.3: measures should be applicable to other Sydney LGAs for consistent reporting and measuring
  - The majority of other actions can be applied throughout greater Sydney
- Publish a report on the results of the actions taken, and include accompanying guidelines on how the actions can be applied to other areas of Sydney
- Devise a Night Time Economy Action Plan for implementation throughout Sydney
- Council notes that the Western Sydney City Deal between local, state and federal government is in its final stages of adoption. This landmark initiative will significantly boost the day and night time economies of participating city centres, which will become even more critical with the opening of the Western Sydney Airport

### Policies that could support a diverse and vibrant music and arts culture across NSW

#### Issue 1: Funding

There has historically been an unequal share of funding for Western Sydney arts and culture. A 2015 Deloitte report titled [Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy](#) found that federal cultural arts funding in Western Sydney amounted to 1% of total arts funding, despite a 9.5% population share in the region. Similarly, state cultural arts funding to Western Sydney equated to 5.6% of total funding, despite a 29.4% population share in the region. The report also found that:

In 2012/13 the state's major cultural institutions [Sydney Opera House, State Library of NSW, Powerhouse Museum, Art Gallery of NSW, Australian Museum, and Sydney Festival] received just under \$400 million in funding. Combined, these venues attracted just over 6 million attendees, representing an estimated subsidy of **\$63.93 per attendee**. In contrast, during 2012/13 the Councils of Parramatta, Penrith, Liverpool, Blacktown and Campbelltown invested

\$8.7 million in their major cultural venues, along with just over \$1.2 million contribute by NSW Government. Combined, these venues attracted over 660,000 attendees, representing an estimated subsidy of **\$14.96 per attendee**. [p.20]

Given the substantial financial commitment made by Western Sydney Councils compared to state government, and the overwhelmingly higher return on investment in Western Sydney arts and culture, Council calls on the NSW government to rectify the funding imbalance. Council recommends that the NSW government take a proactive approach to supporting and growing the music and arts culture in Western Sydney. This will require a focus on maintaining opportunities for artists to live and work within the region, including with local communities, and for local audiences to access cultural activities within their local areas. Council recommends the following actions for the support of Western Sydney arts and culture:

- More funding support for emerging and mid-career artists, creatives and arts collectives to continue to practice in the region
- Recurring funding for flagship cultural events throughout Western Sydney, developed within Western Sydney. Government support could enable a number of 'Vivid-like' events to be sustained throughout the region, thereby increasing its visitor economy and shifting perceptions of Western Sydney culture
- Provide funds to schools, community organisations and Councils to support artist-in-residency programs
- More funding for community organisations and Councils to commission works to be made with and for their communities, whether it be visual art, performance, music, public art, theatre, dance, or literature
- Funding toward development and support of live music venues in the region
- Funding to support creative start-ups and social enterprises operating within Western Sydney
- Research and publication of guidelines and best practice models for the above, including for event development, residency programs, commissioning processes, incubation and start-up hubs

## Issue 2: Live Music

Western Sydney suffers from a lack of live music venues, and a lack of guidance and support for live music in the region. Liverpool recently took part in the Live Music Office's *Live and Local* program, whereby local performers performed in shop fronts, restaurants and cafes throughout Liverpool CBD. The program provided an opportunity for local artists to do paid performances, and also for local businesses to activate their premises with live music. The program was well received by participants and audiences alike. Audiences expressed desire to have access to more live music events and programs, and performers were keen to partake in future opportunities for paid performances. Feedback from participating businesses indicated a strong desire to include live music in their venues, but barriers to participation included lack of funds to pay performers, lack of technical equipment, and lack of the requisite knowledge to instigate regular programming. Furthermore, there are latent regulatory issues which are an additional barrier to growing the live music culture in Western Sydney.

To address this gap in the music economy, Council recommends that the NSW government:

- Develop a policy and accompanying guidelines for development of live music venues, and public spaces conducive to live music, to inform local businesses of the steps towards including live music within existing businesses, and how to establish new ones
- Work with local government to identify appropriate measures to ensure live music venues can continue to operate without threat of restrictions and limitations that are present in neighbourhoods of increasing residential densities. Like many established centres and cities of Western Sydney, Liverpool is transforming into a dense mixed-use CBD. It will be a vibrant location to live, work and enjoy a variety of entertainment, meeting broad government agendas for more liveable cities. The experience from eastern Sydney confirms that measures are required to both protect residential amenity and ensure the viability and longevity of performance venues

### Issue 3: Connections between creative arts and private sector

The music and arts economy is heavily reliant on government funding and support, at all levels. This can often put a strain on local government resources, and results in missed opportunities for meaningful collaboration between communities and arts practitioners. Examples abound in Australia and internationally of effective partnerships between arts practitioners and the private sector, which have numerous community benefits. These include:

- [Edmondson Park water tank](#): in the new Edmondson Park development, Indigenous artist Danielle Mate Sullivan was commissioned by Sydney Water to transform the 32.7m reservoir into a vibrant artwork and colourful landmark
- One of the MCA's key programs, [C3West](#) is predicated on the belief that artists can bring unique value to situations beyond the gallery context. Through careful brokerage processes, C3West creates contexts in which artists work strategically with arts partners, businesses and non-government organisations across Greater Sydney
- [Fraser Studios](#) at the old Kent Brewery development: from September 2008 to July 2012, Queen Street Studio managed the FraserStudios facility for Frasers Property, who had introduced a new initiative to make creative use of vacant warehouse space in the old Kent Brewery development site on Broadway. Three warehouses were temporarily transformed into a multi-disciplinary art space made possible through Frasers Property Australia, City of Sydney and Arts NSW. FraserStudios was returned to the developer in July 2012 for redevelopment, as per agreement. Frasers Property has since incorporated creative arts and innovative urban design into the Central Park precinct. Initiatives include commissioning of a number of permanent and temporary artworks, such as *Halo* by Turpin + Crawford Studio, and the award-winning *Sea Mirror* lighting installation
- [Docklands Art Collective](#): driven by Renew Australia, the Docklands Art Collective brings to the Centre enterprises and independent local initiatives to engage with the local community and bring life, activity and value to the District precinct and Docklands area
- [PepsiCo](#) has an in-house creative division which works with emerging artists and cutting edge technology to promote the brand through unique experiences. The division seeks creative collaborations between PepsiCo brands, artists, musicians, and corporate partners

Artists and creatives can contribute to private sector operations and initiatives through participating on boards, acting as consultants, delivering community engagement programs and consultations, undertaking artist residencies, public art commissions, involvement in urban planning, or for

investigations and forays into the innovation space. Council recommends that the NSW government build on the solid base of experience, case studies and best practice towards a structured framework and targeted campaign advocating for private sector collaboration with the creative arts. This campaign could be driven through a partnership between Create NSW and the Department of Industry, and should include a bank of case studies, guidelines for cross-disciplinary collaboration, and frameworks and pathways towards the normalisation of creative-corporate-community collaborations.

## **Policies that could support the establishment and sustainability of permanent and temporary venue spaces for music and for the arts**

### Issue 1: Lack of art spaces; abundance of disused sites

In Western Sydney there are a number of dormant, underutilised or disused spaces, whether it be dormant precincts, vacant shopfronts, and/or disused buildings. At the local level, the Liverpool CBD experiences high vacancy rates and high turn-over in retail spaces. The issue of dormancy is currently being studied by Dr Jonathan Drane of Western Sydney University, who is conducting a micro study of dormancy and proliferation in Outer West Centres in the Sydney Basin. The research studies outer west centres in the Sydney basin to understand and chart dormant town areas and their potential to proliferate new developments. Thus far, Drane's study has centred around Camden, Campbelltown and Penrith, with views to expand to Liverpool.

Concurrently, Western Sydney suffers from a lack of art-making, rehearsal, recording, production and cultural spaces, making it difficult for artists to live and work within the region, and for the community to access opportunities for cultural and creative engagement. This is evident in anecdotal discussions with artists and the public, in the popularity of programs such as the Parramatta Artists Studio, and in Liverpool's own experiences with providing ad-hoc artists spaces and residency initiatives, for which there is often high interest from local artists. Furthermore, Western Sydney's relative affordability of housing means that artists can be further incentivised to live and work within the region if creative spaces are available to them in the same locales as affordable housing. This has significant economic, social and productivity benefits to the music and arts economy in NSW.

[Precinct 75](#) in St Peters is one such example of the revitalisation of a dormant precinct and disused heritage sites for use by creative arts and start-up enterprises. There are over 70 businesses operating at Precinct 75, ranging from creative, music, food and beverage, style and lifestyle.

Council recommends that the NSW government produces a range of strategic initiatives to support the revitalisation of dormant precincts and disused buildings through the creative arts. Liverpool would be pleased to work together with the NSW government and assist with expertise and resources. Some strategic initiatives include:

- A funding program to support the purchase and/or repurpose of buildings and dormant precincts in Western Sydney, to be used as art spaces, innovation hubs, co-working spaces, pop-up shops, and rehearsal and recording facilities
- The provision of preliminary operational funds (for the first three years) to ensure the sustainability of such spaces and give them the opportunity to become financially viable
- A governance framework to formalise a partnership between State and local government and other stakeholders, such as Create NSW and the Live Music Office, aimed at co-delivery of support for the arts



## Issue 2: Creative arts school

Further to the issue of a lack of creative arts spaces is the overall issue of the absence of a major creative and performing arts school in Western Sydney. The establishment of such an institution in Western Sydney would further reinforce opportunities for artists to live and work within the region. Students would benefit from the practicalities of studying locally, and therefore be less economically disadvantaged and time-poor in comparison to their inner city-dwelling counterparts. A local arts school would also provide opportunities for students to develop their practice locally, within the diverse, multi-faceted and rich cultural life of the Western Sydney zeitgeist, thereby stimulating the growth of, and positive attitude changes towards, arts and culture in the region.

Furthermore, a unique aspect of Western Sydney is its diversity of community and outreach services that are based in the region, in addition to local schools which are populated by very culturally and socio-economically diverse students and families. Within Liverpool LGA alone, there are approximately 30 community and outreach organisations and services. Meanwhile, within the arts sector, there is a growing shift towards community cultural engagement practices. Many artists are working closely with community groups to develop their practice, as well as empower those groups with their own cultural expressions. Demographics which are in higher percentage in Western Sydney than other areas of NSW – young people<sup>1</sup>, CALD people<sup>2</sup>, and people with a disability<sup>3</sup> – benefit greatly from the practice of art as a powerful and therapeutic form of expression. In recent years, there have been many artists who have worked with community groups in the region, in outreach programs, capacity building, art therapy, and other similar objectives. Such artists include, but are not limited to, David Capra, Diego Bonetto, Zanny Begg and Lara Thoms. Community cultural engagement is increasingly becoming an imperative for many art projects and commissions that artists would seek out, with government, not-for-profit, and even commercial enterprises. More and more, artists are expected to have the ability to tap into the zeitgeist and empower communities to tell their own stories through art.

Given these factors, Council recommends that a feasibility study be undertaken for the establishment of a stand-alone creative arts school, or addition to existing university, to be situated in Western Sydney. The study should also strongly consider grounding the school in a solid community cultural engagement ethos. This would assist artists to grow their practice within the region, provide cultural engagement opportunities for various community groups, and create a point of difference from other existing creative arts institutions in Sydney. Liverpool may have resources to contribute to support the feasibility.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2016, there were higher portions of young people aged 12-14 in Greater Western Sydney, than in NSW <https://profile.id.com.au/wsroc/service-age-groups?WebID=200&BMID=40>

<sup>2</sup> In 2016, the total population of people from non-English speaking backgrounds in Greater Western Sydney was 32.7%, compared to 21% for NSW

<sup>3</sup> In 2016, persons with 'need for assistance with core activities' ranked at 5.5% in Greater Western Sydney, compared to 5.4% for all of NSW <https://profile.id.com.au/wsroc/assistance?WebID=200&BMID=40>

**Policy and legislation in other jurisdictions, and options for NSW, including red tape reduction and funding options**

The planning and legislative frameworks to support and grow the music and arts economy, and the night time economy, in NSW are onerous in some areas (Liquor Licencing), and lacking in others (temporary cultural use of spaces). Council recommends an overall streamlining of processes that would support and grow the industry and the night time economy. Recommendations include:

- Guidelines for local government bodies, and accompanying workshops, for developing a Small Bars Policy
- A review of City of Sydney's discussion paper titled *An Open and Creative City: planning for culture and the night time economy*, and where the proposed actions can be applied to areas across Sydney. This review to be published, with recommendations and guidelines for how other Council areas can implement the actions
- Resources and expert advice in relation to planning and building legislation, policies and standards to assist the establishment of new premises
- A major barrier to activating the night time economy with music and entertainment is the requirement within development assessment processes for often expensive acoustic reports. These reports are often cost prohibitive for small businesses wishing to extend opening hours and entertainment offerings. Council recommends the NSW government consider means of mitigating this onerous red tape in the following ways:
  - Providing direct incentive (eg. dollar for dollar grants) for businesses to undertake acoustic reports
  - A facilitated approach through the Department of Industry to appoint Night Time Economy officers to assist small businesses with reporting requirements
  - Initiatives for small businesses to work as a collective to produce acoustic reports for a designated trading area