

**Submission
No 218**

INQUIRY INTO THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Australian Centre for Public History and
The Department of Music and Sound Design UTS

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Submission to the Parliament of New South Wales regarding the music and arts economy in New South Wales

Submission written for the attention of the Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment, regarding their inquiry into the music and arts economy in New South Wales.

This submission is concerned specifically with items b), c) and d) as listed in the Terms of Reference for this inquiry. These are:

- (b) policies that could support a diverse and vibrant music and arts culture across New South Wales,
- (c) policies that could support the establishment and sustainability of permanent and temporary venue spaces for music and for the arts,
- (d) policy and legislation in other jurisdictions, and options for New South Wales including red tape reduction and funding options,

Key issues significant to this submission

This submission focuses on the way existing histories of music and arts in New South Wales might foster a vibrant and sustainable arts culture. It is specifically made in relation to music.

We submit that the mobilisation of public interest in music histories will help to nurture new works and activities, as well as engage audiences and tourists with ways to participate in the legacies of these music and art outputs.

While there is some provision for cultural history participation in the current GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) sector in the state, there has not been a clear and sustained outlet where the general public can engage with historical and culturally significant music. Popular music is dealt with in a particularly haphazard way by the GLAM sector – often overlooked or overshadowed by more traditional forms like western 'classical' music. A more active and systematic fostering of popular music by the GLAM sector would encourage diverse participation by broad cross-generational audiences with existing music and art forms, as well as inspiring the creation of new works.

Evidence

Government supported cultural history initiatives have proved extremely beneficial to the music and arts industries of many states and cities.

There is significant international evidence that demonstrates the benefits of broad population engagement with popular music, of both a contemporary and historical nature. These benefits include increased tourism, increased cultural engagement and the development of new modes of audience and artist participation. At the moment there are individual initiatives across the state like annual Elvis Presley festival in Parkes, or genre based festivals like the Tamworth Country Music festival. And of course, there are dedicated music venues of varying size and scope.

However, very little opportunity exists for sustained and permanent ways for artists and audiences to engage with the cultural history of the popular music of New South Wales. What does appear tends to be centralised and without appropriate diversity – missing the opportunity to really showcase the broader cultural legacy that popular musicians have made in this State.

Case studies

The significance of providing cultural histories for these ongoing activities have been proven by studies elsewhere, notably where specific cities or 'scenes' have actively promoted their popular music legacy. For example, the English city of Liverpool has developed an impressive tourism industry through promotion of itself as the home of "The Beatles". Although the 'fab four' left the city long ago, the active alignment of the place with their legacy continues to draw fans and new tourists. It also provides residents with an additional sense of pride in their home. The cultural history of the music of Liverpool is promoted through specialist tours relating to the band and those they influenced, permanent and sustained public exhibitions, and continued support of historical research into the area and its musical legacy.

Further information about the success of this initiative can be found in the publication below:

Leaver, D & Schmidt (2010): "Together Through Life—an exploration of popular music heritage and the quest for re-enchantment", *Creative Industries Journal* Vol. 3, Iss. 2, pp 107-124.

Closer to home, musicians and academics in Melbourne are currently developing methods of tracking and promoting the cultural history of that city to great success. Seeking to promote and celebrate Melbourne's history and current musical activity as a branded "music city", they are actively seeking to engage popular music audiences, artists and venues with events, permanent exhibitions and archives. Unlike existing outlets dedicated to so-called 'fine' or 'art' music, these initiatives are specifically dedicated to popular music genres and practices, seeking to engage the broadest and most diverse participation base possible.

Further information of the ongoing work by these academics can be found in their recent publication below:

Homan, S., O'Hanlon, S., Strong, C. & Tebbutt, J. (2017) 'In Melbourne Tonight: Pop/rock histories and futures', *Perfect Beat*, 18(2): 95-109

Recommendations

We recommend the Parliament consider the development of targeted initiatives to support the promotion of the cultural history of popular music in New South Wales, and subsequently, audience and artist engagement with the sustainable development of the sector into the future.

We suggest this might be done through the convening a working group of government and music industry representatives, GLAM venues, public historians and councils to strategically invest (with seed money) in events that build on the state's rich music legacies, including:

- Peter Allen (Tenterfield)
- The Bee Gees (Kingsford)
- Johnny O'Keefe (Waverly)
- Silverchair (Newcastle)
- Little Pattie (Maroubra)
- Electronic music (Sydney City)
- Vander and Young (Sydney outskirts)

We also submit that the State government might expand the schemes currently offered through Create NSW to encourage collaboration and engagement of this kind.

Yours sincerely,

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