

**Submission
No 338**

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

Name: Mr Jean-Jacques Fiasson

Date received: 27 February 2018

Dear Committee Members,

I'm a music promoter and events organiser, seeking to establish a community music venue in the Sydenham / Marrickville area. There are a few key points that I would like the committee to consider as part of this inquiry:

1. Music venues as community-building cultural institutions With Sydney's relentless push towards higher density housing and the loss of industrial and commercial space for big apartment buildings, the importance in supporting and helping to foster music venues has never been so great. Smaller local venues need to be encouraged. For large segments of the population, churches no longer serve as community-building institutions. Communities need spaces they can gather in and share experiences. Music venues & art galleries are great examples of such venues, and indeed are venues that have the ability to be generally self-sustaining - and provide a great net social benefit at a minimal cost. One of the main challenges in establishing a venue is in government red tape - whether it be liquor licensing, local council zoning, the impact of noise complaints, and the risks faced in the context of potential licensing breaches when patrons misbehave.

2. The challenges

Noise complaints: The challenges faced by pre-existing venues in gentrifying areas has been covered extensively by the media. The government should examine the Victorian state model. From my understanding, when a venue has been previously established, new neighbouring developments must take this venue into account and the onus would be on these new developments to integrate appropriate noise mitigation materials in the development. Indeed - profits are so high for these developers that an extra percent or two in expenditure on a construction to include better sound insulation is a small price to pay to protect these pre-existing cultural institutions.

Council zoning: As some members of the committee may be aware, a recent vote in the Inner West Council to rezone the Sydenham industrial area to permit music venues failed due to opposition from the Greens and Liberal councillors - fearing a loss of industrial land to such venues. I feel that the social and community benefit of a music venue should be justification at the very least for modification to the LEP to allow for at least a couple of such venues in this area.

Liquor licensing: The four month average waiting time for a liquor license seems excessive, especially when one considers the cost to a new venue - effectively unable to trade during this period. Anything that can be done to reduce this should be considered.

Risks of licensing breaches: The venue should ideally not be held responsible when patrons misbehave and cause an incident, so long as the venue has fulfilled their obligation in terms of RSA and providing adequate facilities and security. It seems unfair that a venue who follows all the rules can be held liable in such instances - especially when considering that venues are often only marginally profitable and provide a great community benefit. These social goods should be taken into account and their ongoing existence should not be threatened - especially if they can illustrate strong compliance and best practice.

Harm minimisation: Illicit drug use in licensed venues is unfortunately a reality for some genres of music. A focus on minimising the harm of illicit drug use would be ideal. Lessons from Europe, such as pill-testing, signage to educate the public, and other similar measures should be considered.

3. Grants and government support

As mentioned previously, I am seeking to establish a venue in Sydenham. Part of the purpose of this venue would be to establish music programs to support and help individuals with disabilities, Indigenous people, and young and emerging musicians. Government support for such programs would greatly help with the ongoing viability of such a venue, and others like it. –

Thank you for your time, JJ Fiasson