

Submission  
No 356

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

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Partially  
Confidential

Music matters. It inspires, it comforts and it motivates us as humans. It's very frequencies vibrate with our base atoms and resonate with our energy.

I was born in Sydney and bred in NSW, in a town where rugby league, rowing and having a family were the only things encouraged when I left school. I had zero interest in any of that - music resonated for me.

At a local level, we had, if any, in-consistent support for encouraging original talent. Venues would sometimes book shows at youth group spaces and local pubs but it was inconsistent at best. Venues would start off all 'gung-ho' and book a string of local bands of all levels and it would be awesome for a while and then it would suddenly stop.

Generally it seems the only real community/council supported arts flavoured performances we see are anything connected with 'The Joan'. Anything else going on, is not heard of until after the event, if at all.

We've never been known as a local original music friendly place.

As well as my home town, Sydney has always been an uphill battle for original music in the last thirty years. Lots of home based entertainment make it hard for people to go out and it's changed the landscape of the music scene.

So when Music NSW contacted the band I manage to offer a gig launching a Western Sydney original music campaign about a year or so ago and the subsequent festival in Parramatta that same year, it sparked hope for a supported music scene.

The festival was a great idea and ran smoothly with many venues participating on the day. I'd like to know if they are still open to the idea of employing original musicians on a more consistent basis.

Recently when I've even considered the seemingly inevitable shift to live near the inner west to play the places that will host live original music and also to avoid the countless late night drives home, on half finished-half-speed-half-cut-off-yet-still-tolled-roads, you have to wonder - is it actually worth it in Sydney?

As it is musicians have to negotiate fees, work long hours, suffer mental stress and drive great distances to carve out a living- usually just breaking even on costs.

Lock out laws, overdevelopment and the willingness to sell off any public asset that's not nailed down seems to pre-occupy our government.

For example, recently, after five years of tireless work by Music NSW, Marrickville Council knocked back a creative hub proposed for the industrial area between Sydenham and Marrickville. It was then announced a short time later in the media that that very slab of real estate was earmarked for apartment redevelopment.

Music seems to get the short end of the stick. Actually it gets poked in the eye by it. Melbourne lifestyle is looking sweeter by the day.

Who wants to go out in Sydney when if you miss the last train going west at one am, then you have to wait until four am to try and get home?

These factors not only choke the nightlife and soul it creates an artistic vacuum in our city. Art is necessary to people, art and music confronts, comments and reflects what is going on in society. I guess if there's no art, there's no questioning the status quo. Complacent people are easier to herd. Sydney is really living up to its 'nanny state' name.

There are so many good gigs going on in Sydney all the time but the legal hurdles facing how venues operate are constrictive and over the top and the music and musicians suffer for it. Complaints about noise by neighbours who have moved in next to an established venue is really stupid. Why are established venues the one to suffer with those repercussions? Perhaps developers should have compulsory soundproofing if building within a certain distance of a venue?

We have a very quiet musicians union. Whilst the general Australian's Union is fighting back to reclaim all sorts of hard won penalties and award rates, musicians still have to negotiate and are poorly paid by the majority of the industry.

If there is a non-payment of services in the music industry, we have little or no option for collecting any payments, relying on trust and reputation to be paid. That works for the majority of gigs but many never get paid for their services.

Whilst I'm not looking for a complete overhaul and award pay system, it would be constructive if there was a support in place for musicians to help with getting paid.

Admittedly there is a selection of grant and competition opportunities available for working musicians to apply for from APRA and Music NSW etc.

In conclusion I hope voicing my concerns is considered and possible solutions are put in place to benefit the entire industry and overall the very arts community in Sydney.

Thank you.