

**Submission
No 250**

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

Organisation: Tamworth Songwriters Association

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I am writing to you as President of the Tamworth Songwriters Association, we represent 300 members directly and approach 750 on our mailing list.

Most of our members are active songwriters and at least half of them also perform. So we do have a large percentage that only write. Of these the common thought is "how do we get our songs heard?" of the ones that perform their common problem is " how do we get to those people who we think want to hear our creations?"

Both of these groups do like to attend workshops for songwriting to improve their skills, all of them find workshops expensive, time consuming and sometimes not worth the effort as established songwriters or those with good voice, good looks or great musicianship seem to "rule the roost".

There are events throughout Australia especially in Country music ,just go to Countrymusicbulletin and the festivals and shows are listed.

Organisers are always looking for new talent, indeed the TSA were contacted for the first Broadbeach music festival for suggestions on new and exciting talent to approach.

For singer-songwriters starting up in Sydney, I suggest to those who are after exposure, Russell Neals Songs on Stage organisation. he has a great organisation that reaches thousands of songwriters.

For those who ask about how to get started I always say there is no silverbullet, just lots of hard work, practise, play live a lot, to as many people as possible and travel....Also enter as many legitimate songwriting competitions as you can here and overseas, don't expect to win first up and never stop trying. IF you are prepared to do this then you may have a future-otherwise, its a hobby.

What you do, and why you do it:

the TSA wishes to promote the interests of its songwriters, our membership is limited to Australian residents. We look for opportunities where our members can play, meet, co-write, workshop, contact each other and we take great pride in the respect the community has in our songwriting competition. A win in the TSA is a great promotion tool and winners use social media to advertise their success and increase their profile.

We also provide information to members on who to contact in community radio to get air play=exposure= profile. This is the reason the TSA exists.

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What works, what gives you hope about your local music community

What works is a combination of festivals, community and mainstream radio, the ability and resources to produce and record your own music and the desire to keep going. We see many people having fun with music but only a few who work really hard, for example Sami Cook, Christie Lamb, Ben Ransom all have talent and work hard, all are TSA members and have been through the showcase system, playing for free, getting started and pushing through to releasing their work independently, getting airplay which results in paid gigs. These examples demonstrate what works but without the grass roots system, getting a start is very difficult - but that also sorts out those who are committed. The Community IE the DJ's on community radio, the festival attendees seem to find out very quickly who is good enough to listen to or go and see. Festival organisers are approachable for new talent the TSA has opportunities at Bonnie Doon Victoria, Port Stephens Blue Water festival, Gympie , Tamworth TCMF and the Mid year Hats Off festival in Tamworth , this is all we can manage, but we have managed to help launch a few early careers- if there is talent, exposure is the key,

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What's not working right now/what are the challenges:

What problems exist are to do mostly with opportunities and the interest of venue owners who need returns on each m2 of space. If songwriters are good enough to play and entertain and keep a crowd, the challenge is how to incentivise venue owners to have them in rather than recorded music or games-also not everybody wants live music-that unfortunately is a given. The other challenge is the limited number of music streaming sites and how much they pay- is there room for local, national streaming? is that a possibility? An economically viable option to break a duopoly and support National songwriters.

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What issues concern you/ should be addressed:

Always Always there is the issue of getting paid for you own songs , the APRA returns helps , royalties help, still the best returns for effort seem to be paid gigs and recorded music sales. It appears that improvements are being made slowly, but as always, supply and demand rules and songwriters should be aware of this. So I refer to above and localise the exposure for the national songwriters.

Commercial radio seems to have changed so much over the years that playing music is a rarity. I do recall the great royalty war in the late 60's (I think) which as a bi-product launched some of our famous acts so controlling what is available can help. Finding and supporting talent has always been an interesting concept throughout history, originally done by benefactors now the State, but the public purse is divided to many sections so maybe the recognition of talent by those in the "industry" can be better noticed by those who can help. It is not really about grants and giving money to individuals as money flows from success by individuals- its all about opportunity and exposure.

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How they can help – what changes can they introduce to make it easier for you to do what you do: if it is easier, more rewarding or "regulatorily" necessary for venue owners, commercial radio programmers, streamers, festival organisers etc to push more national work then opportunities and exposure would certainly follow. There are several well run organisations that help unearth talent, APRA themselves, ASA, TSA, Songs Alive Australia, WAM in Western Australia, SCALA in SA, JJJ and of course the state conservatories and music colleges- These are the kinds of organisations that can recognise at grass roots who is coming on strong and who could do with exposure and opportunity. WAM has a great model to help aspiring musical people-the problem being once through the system -opportunity and exposure.

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What you're willing and able to do to assist them with change:

Talk about creating opportunities for those who demonstrate potential.