

**Submission
No 249**

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

Organisation: Eastside Radio
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**THE PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY INTO THE NSW MUSIC INDUSTRY
SUBMISSION BY EASTSIDE RADIO 89.7FM**

Eastside Radio 89.7 FM would like to make a representation to the NSW Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment inquiry into the music and arts economy in New South Wales.

Eastside Radio 89.7 FM is a strong Community Broadcasting Radio Station based in Paddington in Eastern Sydney and broadcasting to the local community in the Eastern Suburbs and beyond.

We present around 120 Programs per week, and have around 180 volunteers who contribute to the Stations viability and freshness. These include Programs on a wide range of music including jazz, world music, blues, the arts, some ethnic programs and talk programs such as Drive. This has given Eastside Radio an interest in the live music and arts scene around Sydney as well as a general interest in local community issues.

Many of our listeners and presenters enjoy the live music and/or arts scene in the area. It is natural that our listeners and presenters have a strong interest in the local arts and live music industry.

The local arts scene is strong and energetic but, as it does in so many parts of the world, always struggles to remain economically vigorous.

Since the Lockout Laws were introduced, the Station has noticed the decline in the live music scene in the inner Eastern Suburbs.

In recent times many venues within our license area have closed.

We cannot condone any violence that may have occurred at any public venues, especially any that may involve the use of illegal drugs or the excessive consumption of alcohol. However it is unfortunate that, in attempting to control such behaviour, there have been unintended adverse consequences for the live music industry.

Sydney is a world city with a proud reputation for its beauty and vibrancy. An integral part of the growth of this reputation is the availability of entertainment. Restaurants, bars, jazz cellars and music in pubs give variety and amusement to residents and visitors.

The Government, through both sides of politics and via strategic documents such as 'A Plan for Growing Sydney', has worked to facilitate the future evolution of Sydney into a city, which those strategic documents say is 'a great place to live'. A key element of being a great place to live is to have a variety of forms of entertainment. This includes small and large music venues as well as events around the arts.

Recently we have seen the Government invest large sums of money in certain particular areas. We have seen around \$2 billion being made available for football field rejuvenation. There is a proposal to refresh the interior of the Sydney Opera House for several hundreds of millions of dollars. Both of these initiatives have high value for the Sydney-wide community, but they highlight the concentration on major items of infrastructure without a parallel focus on smaller but still important initiatives. We do need these headline facilities, but we also need a range of smaller venues and activities to provide the rich tapestry of attractions that make up a truly vibrant, exciting city.

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The relocation of the Powerhouse Museum from Darling Harbour to Parramatta reduces tourist opportunities in the CBD at a great cost to the economy. But it also reduces cultural opportunities for the community in our broadcast area.

Melbourne has stolen our reputation as a great city for night-time entertainment. Victoria has implemented a range of initiatives around liquor licensing that have fostered a range of night-time music venues to enjoy at reasonable prices. There is no sign of draconian laws such as those implemented in Sydney that are targeted at crime and have the side effect of crushing small bars that offer music, comedy, a place for a quiet drink in the company of a few friends.

Anyone who has visited lively international cities such as New York, London or New Orleans has seen that it is possible to find a balance between the suppression of illegal or anti-social behaviour on the one hand and the support of a vibrant night life on the other.

Eastside Radio 89.7 FM also presents cultural events for the community. The most prominent of these is the Global Rhythms Music Festival each September in Bicentennial Park in Glebe as a part of the Sydney Fringe Festival. This day of outdoors live music, food and children's activities has a growing support base. Over 1,000 people attended this event last September. Events such as this will never be as prominent as say a football grand final or Chinese New Year, but these events all go together to assist in truly contributing to our joint ambitions of making Sydney the genuinely exciting city that is described in the Government's strategic planning documents including 'A Plan for Growing Sydney'.

Eastside Radio 89.7 FM would like to see some initiatives that address such things as:

1. Consideration of a licensing structure (perhaps based on that of Victoria) for small bars and pubs that encourage and facilitate the proliferation of these venues such as has occurred in Melbourne.
2. The recognition of the need for entertainment districts and events that offer a range of entertainment venues so that a wider range of small and large interests are accommodated.
3. A supportive Police presence in areas where there may be issues. Officers on the beat can prevent many anti-social activities, as is seen in New Orleans and New York. There may in the past have been too much emphasis on catching criminals and less emphasis on preventing crime. Sometimes the fees required of promoters to fund Police presence can have a negative impact on the viability of events.
4. Government support for small venues and events (as well as the major, iconic venues and events through measures such as licensing, police presence in specific areas, town planning and zoning measures or small grants.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Eastside Radio