

Submission
No 376

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Dear Committee members

To start I would like to congratulate the NSW Parliament for the ease of use of your website to accepting submissions. I hope this, over time, will broaden the base of submissions and views brought before the Committee. I would also like to thank the Legislative Council for the terms of reference provided to this Committee. Notably, they have omitted to common, yet gross, error of demanding economic value from music and the arts. The terms of reference are a great starting point as they respect the non-monetary economy that already exists where music and the arts are allowed to thrive.

In this submission, I would like to give you the perspective of a run-of-the-mill office worker, who is not an artist herself, but finds life's joys in the availability of music and the arts in Sydney. I have also over the last few years moved back to Sydney, from Canberra most recently, and been disappointed to find my fair city tainted by an adversarial policing and a rule for every mood.

Moving back in 2015, the city felt greyer, a lot more constrained in terms of opportunities for recreation and a lot less free. It almost feels like we are being pushed to go to work, come home (after a long commute), give into fatigue and watch TV over takeaway and wine!

For a free society, Sydney has fallen into targeted policing of its revellers and young people. It is unusual for any city to see police roving the streets where people enjoy themselves. Aggressive security guards at most venues (that are keen not to be shut down if any 'incidents' occur) watch you for any sign of wrong. I once saw a man almost get thrown out of a bar for dancing funny – they suspected he was drunk – he was just awkward.

In this free society, there are rules at every corner - against breastfeeding mothers going to the pub for a chat, because there is such a thing as 'baby licences'; there are rules about what drinks you can buy when (that's relaxed I hear); about the time you have to finish dinner, if you don't want to be locked out; about how late a venue is allowed to open; about what drugs the government chooses not to catch (no RDT for cocaine – the rich man's drug); what licence do you need to set up a community market; how many port-a-loos do you need to hold an event?

We are being reduced to worker bees because everything else that is theoretically available is too expensive and too hard. The people who love Sydney are either being pushed into a residential suburban corner, or out. Is there space in Sydney for the ordinary office worker to live a life bigger than bills and real estate dramas? Must we leave Sydney, permanently or on one short holiday after another, to live?

Time: Our cities are different to our regional centres and need to be considered in light of the very different challenges they face. Sydney needs to use the full 24 hours in the day to adequately cater for the number and type of people we attract. You should be able to get dry cleaning done at 3am; you should be able to knock off work at 9pm and not struggle to find a kitchen that's open; you should be able to pick up parcels at the post office at 7pm. If we can't accommodate shift workers, parents and travellers outside the 10am-5pm timeslot, then we are not only cramming people into a city with inadequate housing and public infrastructure, we are also cutting the time in which each of these people seek to get outcomes. Perhaps the committee could discuss changes to overtime pay

such that workers get paid on the number of consecutive hours worked, with a more limited allowance for the disadvantage for working after 5pm and on weekends. I.e. penalty rates are not entirely determined by when the working hours took place, but rather, if they are 'overtime', with a limited benefit for working nights/weekends. Also the availability of better transport is critical.

Ease of access: You might argue that in Sydney, there are events galore, and one must just look for opportunities. However, they are temporary, expensive and crowded most of the time. A lot of the regular events are markets - commercial and expensive. If events are free, they are priced extravagantly for food and drinks, and the sorry state of public transportation and parking means they often fall within the too hard basket. In any case, people are creatures of habit, we need ongoing community life that one can reliably participate in in the short recreation hours we have. Finding fun should not be a difficult scheduling and planning task that inevitably hits the budget hard. To this end, establishing sustainable permanent venue spaces, and reducing aggressive policing on existing venues is recommended. Noise restrictions are often cited by venues as a reason for not having live music.

Geography: The suburban push as a consequence of Sydney's broken real estate market has already created a geographical divide between places where people live and places where people gather. To add to that every week you hear of a venue that has seen many generations close down because the new residents failed to notice that their neighbour was a space for people to gather and be "not-quiet". The arbitrary zoning of lockouts has created another geographical displacement. Our historical areas of vice and fun are now shut down and Sydney must start from scratch to create those places. In a geographically large city like Sydney, an urban and vibrant feel requires encouragement of specific areas that are guaranteed for a lively night out. Although the Casino is doing a pretty good job of sucking our imagination and money, thanks to the lockouts.

The Committee could consider the benefit of lockouts given the displacement, rather than reduction, of alcohol related violence; a more scientifically based, rather than policing driven, approach on drugs (other than alcohol). Further reliable, frequent and available public transport is critical to creating a vibrant city. It is important to let people know that they don't have to rush to get home lest the transport options become harder. Staggering work times and play times will also have a beneficial impact on traffic and use of the city generally.

Lastly, your work needs experts on cities. This is not a new challenge. It is one that cities around the world have been dealing with. We need to get better at showing the people of Sydney that policies are not randomly developed by narrow interest groups (apartment developers, residents, casino magnates, hospital emergency doctors) – think broad, fair and balanced. Each view is valuable only if it is in the context of other views. Everyone is 'right' only from their perspective. As policy makers your job is to ensure that you see the full picture, and receive expert advice.

Good luck and thank you.