

**Submission
No 390**

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

Organisation: Accessible Arts

Date received: 28 February 2018

Accessible Arts is a leading organisation for the intersection of Arts and Disability including advocacy for artists, audiences and staff with disability across NSW.

We are keen to see policies and initiatives that support and develop the live music industry across NSW becoming inclusive of audiences, musicians and staff with disability; increasing access for people with disability across music festivals and venues in particular.

As stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Right, Article 27:

“Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”

Access remains an issue for both audiences and musicians with disability across NSW, in both metropolitan and regional areas.

We ask that the following points be considered in your inquiry:

Physical barriers exclude audiences and musicians with disability:

Many contemporary music venues throughout NSW are not wheelchair accessible. This locks out audiences with disability engaging in live music. While some larger, more mainstream music venues, such as The Opera House and City Recital Hall are somewhat accessible in terms of physical access, most small/medium venues are not at all accessible.

Of further problem to musicians with disability, the vast majority do not have accessible stages. For musicians with physical access requirements, this is a major barrier to live performance, is detrimental to their skills development, and their ability to further develop their craft and forge strong networks.

Economic barriers exclude audiences and musicians with disability:

Disabled people have a significantly lower disposable income. The cost of tickets, particularly to international or name acts, is often prohibitive. Even being able to enjoy a local night at a music venue often involves additional costs such as transport, access support workers etc and excludes many people with disability engaging with the live music community. While small/medium sized venues tickets may be more affordable, often the physical access excludes people with disability.

As shown in the recent report by Australia Council for the Arts Connecting Australians 2017, Australian artists with disability (including musicians) earn 42% less overall than artists without disability. This is often due to the lack of paid work.

Suggestions:

Access for audiences, musicians and staff with disability working within the live music industry across NSW can be increased through government initiatives:

- Making a commitment to improving physical access to live music venues for both audience, musicians and staff with disability
- Making a commitment to increasing the number of people with disability working within the industry through internships, affirmative action and supported grant programs
- Encouraging music venues and festivals to take up successful initiatives such as Gig Buddies (<https://www.gigbuddiessydney.org/>) and the Companion Card
- Encourage Auslan and audio described events
- Encourage quiet spaces at festivals for people with sensory requirements particularly those with mental health access needs
- Encourage marketing strategies to reach out to particular disability groups for inclusion

- Making a commitment to increasing disability awareness through arts and disability training

Thank you for your consideration