

**Submission
No 272**

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

Organisation: Bulahdelah Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Inc.

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Bulahdelah Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
Inc.

Prepared by John Sahyoun

New South Wales Legislative Council: PORTFOLIO
COMMITTEE NO. 6 – PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT

RE – Inquiry into *The music and arts economy in
New South Wales*

Submissions close 28.02.2018



BULAHDELAH
Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Inc.
ABN 86 510 739 193
PO Box 30
Bulahdelah NSW 2423
Ph: 4997 4764



New South Wales Legislative Council: PORTFOLIO
COMMITTEE NO. 6 – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney New South Wales 2000

RE – Inquiry into the music and arts economy in New South Wales

Chairperson,

We wish to make a contribution to the inquiry *The music and arts economy in New South Wales*.

We believe such an inquiry is important in the support generally of the arts, music and the wider associated economy.

The development of long term plans and policies and the coordination between government agencies and other interested parties is essential to realising this future vision of a productive and vibrant arts and music economy.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry. We believe this inquiry is important to both the best interests of both the general population of New South Wales and tourism interests, both domestically and internationally.

On behalf of the Bulahdelah Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Inc.

John Sahyoun

President

28.02.2018

1. Our Organisation

The Bulahdelah Chamber of Commerce Inc. is a small business Chamber located on the mid north coast of New South Wales (NSW) in a coastal rural area. We act as the peak body for business, tourism and community interests for our area. In addition we are a founding member of the MidCoast Business Chamber and have and won the Hunter Business Awards and were placed as runners up at the State Business Awards for 2017. We have established links with the Hunter Business Chamber and the NSW Business Chamber and are significantly placed to represent the best interests of our region.

2. Our Interest

The current inquiry “The music and arts economy in New South Wales”¹ addresses the principle of “support(ing) a diverse and vibrant music and arts culture across New South Wales”. A third of Australian economic activity is generated in NSW and the arts are significant drivers in promoting our state economy. The development of a vibrant arts culture is essential in branding towns, etc as cultural venues and providing additional support to local economies.

Being a rural Chamber, we are primarily concerned with rural NSW and the effect of any policy by way of legislation and government departmental initiatives has on the economies of a diverse range of population types within regional/rural NSW.

We believe that the inquiry addresses four broad issues, these being –

- The need to address the many broad issues that affect this sector.
- The need to affect sensible and workable policies/legislation in this area.
- The need to build and support a workable approach to the arts and music.
- The need to coordinate various government, employment and lobby groups to produce a sustainable plan for the development of the arts/music economy.

The NSW *Destination 2036 Action plan*, for example comments on a wide range of initiatives that need to take place over the next twenty years and in part recommend (of which are significant to the development of an arts and music economy)

- Being responsible for detailed plans that focus on the economic development of their region, taking into account relevant Commonwealth, state, territory and local government plans,
- Working closely with community leaders to identify priority activities that will drive economic development,

¹ NSW Government (2017) TERMS OF REFERENCE
<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/DBAssets/Inquiry/TOR/2471/Terms%20of%20reference%20-%20The%20music%20and%20arts%20economy%20in%20New%20South%20Wales.pdf>

- Providing assistance to local communities to identify funding sources and develop project proposals to support economic growth.²

3. Issues for Consideration

The arts and music needs to be valued as a significant and necessary contribution to our culture. They contribute to our overall economy by associated endeavours such as the provision of employment, food and accommodation services. They are essential in developing a visitor economy both domestically and internationally, especially large scale events.

They are based on a wide range of factors.

“Successful global cities provide a wide range of opportunities to create or experience the City’s cultural life and its leisure and entertainment options. They strike a rich balance between private and public attractions and attract a diversity of ages, lifestyles, and cultures throughout the day, evening and night. Evidence shows that this diversity of options leads to a stronger, more connected and resilient community, creates a more inclusive nightlife, improves safety and reduces crime.”³

Technology and new digital streaming has changed consumption patterns where a strong following on social media platforms has replaced the live experience. A supportive and vibrant economy can be assisted by

- Increased marketing and advertising
- Funding and grants to support a wide range of musical and artistic endeavors.
- Support and promotion assistance to local and small scale events that reflect the cultural character of the area
- Creation of regional hubs for the arts

It is noted that the government’s aim is to produce

“A vibrant, safe and growing night-time economy (that) is important for social and economic reasons ... it must appeal to a broad demographic mix that includes young people, families, older people domestic and international visitors who want to participate in ... nightlife and cultural activities.”⁴

² Regional Development Australia (2016) *New South Wales* [available] <https://rda.gov.au/my-rda/n>

³ City of Sydney (2017) PUBLIC EXHIBITION - DISCUSSION PAPER: AN OPEN AND CREATIVE CITY - PLANNING FOR CULTURE AND THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY. TRANSPORT, HERITAGE AND PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE 16 OCTOBER 2017 [available] http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/290643/171016_PDC_ITEM05.pdf

⁴ NSW Government response to the Sydney Night-Time Economy Roundtable. December 2016 p3

- It is important to include all participants within our various communities and to have policy that takes into account their varying musical and cultural needs.

Traditional venues such as clubs are viewed by youth as places where older people socialise. It is noted that over the past decade there has been a general decline in the profitability of pubs and clubs⁵ especially for smaller venues. The provision of music is often associated with these types of venues.

- Consideration be given to the promotion of clubs as “social meeting places” where a wide range of artistic and musical events take place.
- Venues should be encouraged to promote under 18 years events.

A mix of social and business activities in venues such as “retail, theatre, film, culture, education, service industries, restaurants, hotels, clubs, cafes, small bars, markets, sport, live music, concerts, festivals and other events”⁶ demonstrates that cultural and musical events can cater to a wide range of clientele. Each venue type has differing delivery models, each responding to patron’s behaviour. As such, each requires a differing development application process and differing regulations that they must adhere to

- Law and order requirements: While in the case of the so-called “Newcastle Solution” where over a ten year period there has been a package of modest alcohol restrictions that have reduced alcohol related assaults on weekends by 72 per cent⁷ and this acted as a trial for extension of restrictions on the service of alcohol across NSW, such a policy is punitive as it restricts those venues and events that have not resulted in incidents. *The Horton Review*⁸ suggests for example that there would be support of later trading hours and other incentives for “low impact” licensed premises with a twelve month annual review of compliance. This could be extended across the state to enhance suitable venues.
- Planning Regulations – Consideration must be given to “pre existing use” especially in the development of music venues. This includes fair management of noise impacts. Overall guidelines to be constructed at the State level to give local councils a common framework as DA processes differ across different local councils.

⁵ Purcell, C. (2009) The day the music died. *The Sydney Morning Herald* 31 December 2009. [available] <https://www.smh.com.au/news/entertainment/music/the-day-the-music-died/2009/12/29/1261982306603.html>

⁶ NSW Government response to the Sydney Night-Time Economy Roundtable. December 2016 p3

⁷ Woods, C. (2017) Newcastle Solution is working. *Police Association of NSW*. [available] <https://pansw.org.au/news/headlines/newcastle-solution-is-working.html>

⁸ NSW Department of Industry (2018) Review of licence conditions for 14 Newcastle CBD venues [available] <https://www.liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au/Pages/ilga/consultations/Newcastle-CBD-venues-review-licence-conditions.aspx>

- Regulation – No ‘one size fits all’ in terms of differing cultural and music events. Simplifying red tape and comprehensive policy should be viewed as a priority.

We applaud the efforts of the government to establish round tables in major cities (for example Sydney and Newcastle) within the state to bring together various interested parties in formulating an action plan. Too often debate is limited to discussions within one cultural production area and much commentary particularly in the provision of popular music is based on anecdotal and opinion pieces.

- Further consideration might be given to the formulation of similar roundtables in regional and rural NSW as they are currently under represented in wider discussions.
- Regional “think tanks” to explore and potential opportunities to advance the arts and music and to establish guidelines and policy for best practice.
- Further evidence-based research be conducted into the various factors that influence the success or otherwise of music, artistic and cultural events.
- Consideration be given to an integrated strategy and how this strategy contributes to the music/arts economy. The arts and music are important “value added” undertakings to the overall economy. It needs to have “the flexibility to adapt and innovate without undermining public safety”.⁹
- The need to learn from the lessons from economic successes/failures of other countries. Similar economies may have previously experienced similar issues and may provide insights into future directions for NSW. For example, the music industry in the United Kingdom has suffered significant decline in recent years in part due to similar regulatory regimes as in NSW^{10, 11}.

4. Conclusion

The music and the arts can contribute to the government’s ideal of a “vibrant, safe and strong” economy. Barriers, obstacles and opportunities exist but by deliberate and constructive dialogue by key and informed players we can create a truly sustainable and energetic music and arts economy.

⁹ NSW Government response to the Sydney Night-Time Economy Roundtable. December 2016 p3

¹⁰ Clarke-Billings, L. (2015) Half of UK nightclubs close in ten years as Brits abandon rave culture. *The Telegraph* 10 Aug 2015. [available] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/11794636/Half-of-UK-nightclubs-close-in-ten-years-as-Brits-abandon-rave-culture.html>

¹¹ Pollock, D. (2015) The slow death of music venues in cities. *The Guardian* 9 Sep 2015 [available] <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/sep/09/the-slow-death-of-music-venues-in-cities>