

**Submission
No 306**

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

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My submission focuses on adult and youth learning in music and the creative arts.

I have a PhD in adult learning, which partly focused on the Arts as transformative learning tools, both socially and individually.

The Arts are a vital part of a well rounded society. However, NSW appears to have dropped the ball, in some areas, on the value that Arts, music, and creative engagement can have for individuals and society.

Arts and music are valuable for mental wellbeing, for health, for social connection, for brain development in children, and can enhance neuroplasticity in the brain at any age, among many other valuable uses. They can bring people together in sharing and enjoyment. They have been demonstrated to support some areas of physical healthcare, and for mental wellbeing. Pathways of learning can be stimulated through engaging in music and other creative activities. On a wider social level, the Arts can be important tools for positive social change as well as useful for individual meaning-making and self-expression.

The Arts can deeply contribute to both positive social change and individual experience. However, they need funding and support in order for people to be able to access some areas of learning and education in these areas for positive experience.

Education and Learning (adults and youth).

Some general recommendations to assess for funding:

Allowing more funding to be allocated to youth work and community areas specifically for music and other creative subjects/endeavours, so that disadvantaged youth (of all ethnicities) are given more opportunities for serious engagement in learning music, enabling them to perceive it as a productive and artistic contribution in society.

To lead seminars and courses that refocus the Arts/music as strong contributors to a well rounded society. Offering a broad range of musical focus, from classical to contemporary, through standard musicianship to alternative methods of teaching.

Many young people completely miss out on being able to learn music at school age, either because their school does not have music as a subject or because their family cannot afford to get them music lessons. Music education does not appear to be a priority at this stage in NSW public schools.

Therefore, making some compensation for this lack, for those no longer at school, would currently be an initiative that is worth looking into.

To offer more courses in both informal and formal learning settings, such as within community colleges and council run courses that are free, or very low cost, being subsidised so that participants do not need to pay high fees for music courses, whilst maintaining that the teachers/facilitators are paid the correct wage/salary for their work and expertise.

Reassessing access pathways to various university courses for those who have completed some accredited /introductory/community courses in arts and/or music, so that university level education continues to be made more accessible for people who wish to pursue it.

Although this may be a federal education task, and some elements of it may be already implemented for some courses, NSW could also implement aspects of it within state levels, by accrediting various community and industry courses for recognition for university entry.

To implement workshops and classes in councils, both regional and city, for mature people to begin music and other creative arts endeavours, who may never have had that opportunity or who are unemployed, seniors, or on low wage. Included in this could also be vouchers for a certain number of private lessons with music instructors of various instruments.

To bring back the 'Skillshare' style of activities that were fairly widely available in part of the 90s, which assisted the unemployed/low-waged to access approved creative arts/music courses for free, or for minimal cost.

The funding to Arts/Music training courses in that area was quite suddenly cut at the time. Some commercially run audio recording studios and small audio schools ran productive and informative skills training in recording and audio engineering and music industry oriented topics, through govt subsidies at that time. However, it was decided that the music industry was not a priority, and funding was completely cut to those courses. This sent yet another message that music is not a priority in NSW training, learning, and education.

This lack of priority for music could be rectified to an extent now, through some new kind of scheme that supports music in education and learning. Reintroduce training schemes that encourage music education and enhance the value of music, where participant fees are subsidised.

Allocate more funding to research for the creative arts, in music and other creative areas, both in creative-expressive academic research, and in industry related research. Allocate more funding to non-traditional research outputs such as Arts-based research methodologies.

Arts precincts or festivals being subsidised for regional councils and outer suburban councils. Begin to implement a strong, thriving, culture of arts in the suburbs in a variety of ways.

Support the Inner West Arts precinct that has been proposed for Sydenham Station area around Marrickville, in Sydney. Areas such as these could become vibrant areas for arts and culture, and enhance our cities and towns in many different ways, being places for live music, other creative work and performance, as well as teaching and learning. Sydney is a major city and as such needs to be a leading example, prioritising creativity and all arts, to provide a brilliant, diverse, artistic platform, and sparking a positive sense of change within NSW.