

Submission
No 375

INQUIRY INTO THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Future Classic

Date received: 12 March 2018

Dear Parliamentary Committee,

We write to you as a group of artists and small businesses who while we've developed international careers and profile, all still proudly call Sydney home.

Starting as an after-work labour of love in the living room of a small Chippendale terrace, we, Future Classic, have grown to be one of Australia's leading independent music companies spanning artist management, record label services, touring and events, and music publishing.

We are pleased to say we work with and represent some of the best Australian music talent, including Flume, Nick Murphy (fka Chet Faker), Flight Facilities, Jagwar Ma, Touch Sensitive, Wafia, G Flip and Ta-ku. Collectively our artists have 1 Grammy Award, 32 ARIA award nominations, 17 ARIA award wins, 2 gold albums, 9 gold singles, 1 platinum album, 1 multi platinum album and 15 multiplatinum singles. Internationally, we have artists who have cracked Top 40 radio in America, who have multi platinum singles in America, who are headlining international festivals and selling out 10,000 + capacity venues. These are Australian artists, artists who've grown and developed here in Sydney, taking to the international stage.

We are deeply concerned by alcohol related violence and the impact this has on the victims, their families, friends and our society overall. We want a safe city and absolutely agree that as a community we need to acknowledge this problem and look at initiatives to address it.

We acknowledge though that four years on from their implementation, simply removing the lock out laws will not solve the problem we are facing in Sydney. The issues are greater than that now. We are in a crisis and these laws are destroying the cultural fabric and economy of the city.

There's a complex tapestry of people whose livelihoods are impacted on the closing of late night venues. The implications of these laws don't just impact on music careers. The reduction in people out in the city also means other small businesses (restaurants, news agencies, taxis and so many more) are suffering.

Simply put, the current lock out laws, coupled with restrictive planning, noise and liquor regulations and policing decisions means venues that support the next generation of artists can no longer sustain themselves. For us, and all of our artists, live income is a critical revenue stream. It's also where we've built our audience and honed our skills, in order to grow to the next level. It's the essential link that has enabled us go from producing music in bedrooms, to achieving multiplatinum album sales and touring both nationally and internationally.

It's what helps sustain livelihoods, to become compelling businesses, to employ staff and continue to grow international careers.

We and all of our Sydney based artists, including Basenji, Flight Facilities, Flume, Hayden James, Jagwar Ma, Panama, Seekae, Touch Sensitive, Wave Racer and World Champion started our careers in late night venues across Sydney. That Sydney was one that nurtured talent and helped us develop skills that have seen us take Australian music to an international stage, and bring international music to an Australian audience through promoting tours.

That city was vibrant, safe and economically compelling until 2014.

Beyond the immediate financial impact, we are saddened by the idea that the next generation won't have the opportunities we've had, not because they're not good enough, not passionate enough, or there's not an audience - but because there's no places for them perform, to grow and develop.

The ecosystem of venues that once supported our artists' development is being degraded. The changed regulatory landscape means venues can no longer afford to have as many artists on a night, which means there are less opportunities for gigs. Less gigs means less cash and ability to sustain themselves. It also means less chances to hone their craft, less experiences to develop their skills, find their audience and grow their community. That in turn means it's harder to find the momentum to actually develop a career. There's no shortage of skill in our city, state or country, but less opportunities does have an impact on pipeline for talent to develop and for careers to grow.



FUTURE CLASSIC

Level 1, 130 Redfern Street Redfern NSW 2016

PO Box 1535, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

www.futureclassic.com.au

This was explained by one of our artists, arguably one of Sydney's greatest contemporary exports, Flume, at the 2016 ARIAs. "I want to say a big thank you to the venues, especially the small venues and the small parties that are doing what they're doing, because that's where music evolves, that's where all the exciting stuff happens, and that's what's getting shut down right now," Flume said.

"To our policy makers and our politicians, please keep Sydney open so that the young artists, so that the next generations of musicians, can have the same opportunities that I had."

We live across the city, from the Northern Beaches, North Shore, Eastern Suburbs, Inner city and South West. We've travelled the world and Sydney is our favourite place, but the place it is becoming is not the Sydney we know and love. We can be and are better than this.

We'd like the Government to do something meaningful to address alcohol related violence. However, please listen to the many voices across the community who are telling you the current lock out laws are not only not solving the problem they were created for, but are additionally having a detrimental impact on Sydney's culture and economy. Like you, we care about Sydney being a safe city, but we also want to nurture the cultural fabric and economic viability of music in Sydney.

Yours,
Future Classic