

Submission
No 392

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Proposal For Increasing Regional ABC Radio Access & Exposure

To say that the Triple-J system is wildly successful is hardly a groundbreaking notion. To say that it is also wildly flawed and somewhat concerning as a taxpayer-funded arm of the music industry is nothing new either.

Regional acts trying to navigate the confusing and intimidating world of Triple-J are often left feeling voiceless & overlooked, with many younger and inexperienced acts giving hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of dollars to specialized radio & PR companies or individuals who claim that they can get them on the radio. Although the Unearthed initiative is groundbreaking and successful in its own right, the station still suffers from a metropolitan bias across its Triple J/Double J/Unearthed platforms.

Its offices are located in Sydney, and its presenters and music directors are surrounded by...well, their surroundings. This creates a self-fulfilling feedback loop, in that they play what they hear and they hear what they play, which, in the case of Sydney and Melbourne, is an increasingly narrow spectrum of music that is often wildly at odds with the voices and desires of those not within the city limits. To wit: making music using the standard “guitar, bass, & drums” is getting harder and harder in cities, with increasing rents and noise restrictions driving more and more kids into the confines of their bedrooms. The music they create is a result of that. Meanwhile, regional areas are less bound by such restrictions, and the music subsequently reflects that. Both of them are simple realities, but metro music creators are over-represented on the airwaves, to the detriment and consternation of their regional counterparts.

I am proposing a multi-pronged approach towards exposing regional NSW acts. The first is that the playlists for each station in the Triple-J family meet a minimum quota of music from acts based in regional areas.

The second would be for each regional ABC Station to host a weekly segment focusing on exposing the music coming from its own communities, thus fostering a greater sense of regional pride and recognition, as well as being a more approachable avenue for many bands as they start their careers and begin navigating the labyrinth of terrestrial radio for the first time. The goal is to create a series of smaller stepping stones for young acts, as well as create a level playing field as far of media & radio exposure.

Additionally, Triple-J currently hosts specialty shows each night of the week, focusing on Hip-Hop, Punk, Metal, and Roots. Music from regional Australia deserves a seat at this table as well.

Lastly, the music opinions of regional NSW & Australia need to be a constant presence in the national ABC decision-making process, not an occasional afterthought. This exasperating provincialism leaves those of us in regional Australia feeling, quite frankly, ripped off. Why are taxpayers funding a national radio station that operates autonomously with no transparency or accountability? Why are regional acts treated as a novelty?

I think these are questions worth exploring, and these pervasive metropolitan biases worth scrutinizing and challenging if need be.

Thank you for your time,

General Proposal For Supporting Live & Original Music and Musicians in Regional Areas

There is a common misconception that regional areas of NSW (and Australia in general), are wastelands of talent and devoid of artistic appreciation. Not only is this untrue, but it fuels an ever-growing divide between metropolitan areas (with their concentrated artistic & media resources), and regional markets. This leads to a patronizing disconnect and a pervasive sense of provincialism. Although the scope of this proposal is small, it speaks to the larger issues that make arts in regional areas so complex.

Smaller bands (from regional or metropolitan areas) can rarely afford to tour regional venues, often because many of these venues require the acts or artist to supply their own production (PA, lights, etc). Few, if any, bands can afford to do this. This means that most of these venues are serviced by local acts, often playing covers. This leads to the perception that regional areas ONLY want cover bands, but it is really a matter of ONLY cover bands are able to play in regional areas.

We are proposing a series of grants or matching funds so that suitable regional venues can provide in-house PA and/or lighting, with additional subsidies for those venues willing and/or able to provide accommodation to artists as well. This helps ensure that smaller bands are able to tour and meet new potential fans, and consumers are able to experience music of the same quality that metropolitan areas have access to.