

**Submission
No 409**

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

Name: Mr Milton Brown

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Hon Paul Green MLC
Committee Chair
Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Planning and Environment

I am writing this as a retired school teacher who now plays music for a hobby in local venues.

I play in duos, trios and occasionally in a larger band.

I have supported the live music scene for over 50 years and have seen its rise and fall.

Historically the 3 major impacts I witnessed that affected crowds and venues were Random Breath Testing (a good thing), Noise complaints (a 50/50) and Pokies (another bad thing)

Right now I am witnessing a new trend in the form of over zealous licensing inspectors.

I am in no way wanting to condone breaking the law but it seems to me that the enforcers are simply out there looking for the slightest indiscretion and boom - big fines, licences lost, bar staff impoverished and so on.

In 3 venues that I have played recently, owners have recounted their experiences, the worst being when a patron was enjoying their beer and eating their Pizza on a lounge and not at a table. I'm sure many more stories like this exist but the impact of this kind of petty scrutiny on live music is that club and bar owners will simply shut down.

The other ongoing issue is noise complaints. One local club has had constant complaints from a neighbour and closed their outside summer bar as a result. We were playing on Sundays from 1-4 with a small PA and acoustic guitars and as soon as we would start, she would ring the club and then ring the Police. Her house was 300 metres from the Club and separated by a main road but the Police had to attend and the club had to spend time dealing with the issue while in constant fear of being fined. What a waste of resources. The pleasure gained by those attending, the work provided for locals and the general community spirit engendered by live music were all lost due to a disgruntled human. I say these people are reacting to the " offensive sound of people having fun". How sad. I imagine this will get worse as housing densities increase and people move in next to existing venues. How often have we already seen that happen.

I understand the need for regulation but the main thing if you want to promote live music is to keep venues open.

I don't advocate a return to the crazy days when venue owners could stuff a room full of punters and allow them to get wasted. That was unsustainable however some balance needs to be restored so that owners can have a viable regulatory regime that gives them similar rights to a single complainant.

I also suggest a licensing regime that focuses more on education and support with enforcement being a final option.

I submit my humble observation to the committee in the hope that they will help you to complete a picture and make informed recommendations for the future benefit of live music.

Kind regards

Milton Brown

P.S. You should look at the live scene in Nashville, Memphis or New Orleans to see how popular live music cities operate their music precincts.