

**Submission
No 71**

**INQUIRY INTO INTEGRITY, EFFICACY AND VALUE FOR
MONEY OF NSW GOVERNMENT GRANT PROGRAMS**

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Committees / Inquiries
The Parliament of NSW

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2606#tab-termsofreference>

To whom it may concern,

I've been a professional musician since 1974. I've been part of Stylus and Air Supply, I was in the bands behind John Farnham, Tommy Emmanuel and Richard Clapton, I have recorded 5 albums of my own, and I've done concerts in Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and even India. I have worked in music education in Malaysia, China and Australia. Over many, many years. Up to and including today.

There is an emergency facing the Australian music industry!. In the state of NSW, the Lockout Laws almost killed live music. Fortunately, after four agonizing years, they were finally rescinded. We've now gone from Lockout to Lockdown. It would be hilarious if it were not disastrous. Real lives are at stake now. No one is laughing.

Has there ever been a government that has assumed a society can exist without The Arts, and the Performing Arts specifically? That excellence IN The Arts MUST NOT be encouraged and sustained, as a major priority, for that society?

Has there ever been a government that believes its people don't actually really need to "go out" at all - to see theatre shows, to see live music performances, as they also might need to "go out" and see large football games and other sports?

Does ANY government in the world think that its people will be happy and content "staying home" all of the time and having their food and drink delivered by underpaid boys on electric bikes? And that's IT? That's life? Does anyone have such a vision of a society?

Australia has been blessed with an above-average % of its people who seem to be gifted in The Arts - hence we have so very many skilled musicians/entertainers We all know the names of the big ones. Jimmy Barnes, Tina Arena, John Farnham, Kate Ceberano, James Morrison. That's a fraction of the Top Tier.

And the “next tiers” down are exploding with names, far too many to list here.

The introduction of vital, new artists into the “talent pool” has slowed up considerably in recent years, for a multitude of reasons (the shift from a “Record Companies” based system to the free-for-all downloads-then-streaming services system being one huge example), but COVID-19 has knocked everything out of the park, literally.

COVID-19 restrictions on venues, have all but destroyed the life of those venues. Amazingly, a handful have adapted-and-survived (in NSW) and WILL continue to survive, IF they receive support. People have proven that they WILL go out and even pay more, if the entertainment is high quality, and - now - the attention to safety protocols is absolute.

“LazyBones Lounge” and “Camelot”, in Marrickville, have emerged in only the last 6 or 7 years, and have survived everything that destiny could throw at them. The resilience they have shown is evidenced by not only re-opening after Sydney’s lockdown period, but by making renovations/improvements, during the period. They have demonstrated good business acumen plus attention to details regarding safety and caring for their patrons. They both deserve major respect.

I consider that the following two matters require urgent consideration.

***Grants and funding:** the processes of application for funding simply must be made more user-friendly and more plain-English.

Grants/funding are not a luxury any more, they are a survival life-line. Grants/funding must be made available to individual musicians who demonstrate long-term integrity as working artists, AND also for venues that have shown clearly that they are “here to stay” and are “serious”, for example - LazyBones Lounge and Camelot, in Marrickville, as mentioned above.

***Travel:** travel exemptions must be considered urgently for musicians with international contacts who may, for example, suddenly find that they have work opportunities outside of Australia.

New South Wales has an opportunity to lead the nation right now. As the most populous state and carrying a huge number of talented artists, it can lead a recovery like we could not imagine. Victoria is in absolute ruins following the mismanagement of its COVID-19 problems. I have no idea how it may recover. Fortunately NSW has shown better skills and integrity.

I urge our NSW government to give careful consideration to the problems facing the Music Industry and Performing Arts sector.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Sam McNally

Keyboard-player/pianist, educator

<https://pnschl.wixsite.com/sammcnally>

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