

**Submission
No 76**

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

Name: Ms Simone Waddell

Date Received: 23 August 2020

To whom it may concern,

I feel honoured to have the opportunity to contribute to this much needed inquiry.

For context, I was born in Sydney, I have a Bachelors Degree and a Masters Degree both in music. For almost thirty years I've performed in multiple countries around the world, and coached thousands of private lessons for singers - from beginners to professionals. I also facilitate vocal workshops and retreats for singers. I've recorded four albums, three EPs, and multiple singles.

I was the first Australian to receive a scholarship to Berklee College of Music through the international connection created by Dr Clive Pascoe from Southern Cross University, Lismore.

Regarding this inquiry, I feel deep despair at what has been happening in our music industry - even before Covid.

Obviously once lockdowns and Covid restrictions were introduced the decimation was virtually complete.

The contemporary music industry has suffered possibly more comprehensively than any other industry through 2020.

Interestingly, the world class level of talent here in NSW is staggering, and it is baffling that there is such little support for the absolutely wonderful and gifted artists we have.

My concern is around numerous issues, however on the issue of grants and funding, I speak on behalf of many of my fellow professional musicians when I say that the process to apply for grants is arduous, can feel devaluing, and often has a ghastly mix of restrained hope and concern when one applies.

The hope is natural. People desire to do phenomenal creative exploits and without question, we have the goldmines of talent in NSW to achieve mind blowing results.

The restraint of hope is employed as it can be quite difficult to submit an application with confidence, knowing the amounts available are small, and the chances of receiving one are even smaller.

The concern comes from past experience, not wanting to receive yet another rejection email.

For some, the process has become so traumatic (no exaggeration) they refuse to even attempt anymore.

I know numerous incredible artists who simply cannot find any strength to go through the process again.

The lack of clarity around "why" the grant application was rejected also leaves musicians demoralised, despite the fact that they are excellent artists and some would even be considered masters in their field.

Surely hiring professional grant writers is not the only way forward for NSW artists?

It can be so much hard work to apply, gather support material, gather signed documents from others who support the project, create detailed budgets down to the last dollar...and then have so much hope shattered when there's no grant forthcoming. "Highly competitive" and "limited funding" are phrases we hear a lot.

What are artists meant to do?
Especially now?

It is illegal for us to perform or travel.

Many have been forced to leave music altogether and work in office or other jobs. This is quite heartbreaking as some of NSW most qualified musicians cannot do their craft, their gifts are not utilised, and we the people miss out on their artistic expression and legacy.

After a successful independent tour in China last year, (with zero government support) I had two more international tours for my original music cancelled this year due to Covid. I had worked for years to establish those, and after completing my Masters as the only jazz vocalist in Australia to ever receive a Masters Degree from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, I'm still unable to attain any grants.

What does one need to do?

I was rejected by Australia Council and NSW Create for exciting well planned projects that were supported in writing by the Sydney Conservatorium as well as numerous top musicians, studios, producers and videographers. I was unable to even receive \$5000 from NSW Create.

Personally, I desperately need serious funding.

I'm sure many feel that way.

It is possible that I can focus solely on teaching rather than continue any attempts to perform or record at all, however that seems a travesty of an outcome.

Some artists have been able to do online streaming yet it is a very far cry from festivals, tours, live shows etc.

Importantly, sidemen such as drummers, bass players, and horn players need ensembles to perform or record with, and many who apply for grants do so, so that those talented sidemen (and women of course) are utilised in their projects.

Creative people are remarkable with their ability to adjust, and the options and potential for recording, future developments, writing, arranging, filming, and collaborations through this season are enormous. It is possible to pivot and it is possible that with strong support, NSW could lead the world with thriving, vibrant and innovative new ideas.

We need help though.

We need serious funding that provides support so that we can focus on art which can develop into world class results.

The talent is here and the talent is ready.

I implore the NSW leaders to lead the nation with unprecedented funding, respect, and value for the unbelievable talent that exists here regarding contemporary music.

Please make the grant opportunities simple and please make them abundant and generous so that our musicians can create and thrive.

Another worthy option is to provide an ongoing stipend to artists who can continue to create works and will collaborate with and employ designers, producers, musicians, sound engineers, videographers, make up artists, hairdressers, arrangers, and more.

Even a small amount often means the world to any musician, and creating viable and wonderful art is their specialty.

Please also subsidise venues, festivals, and events, so that when live music is restored, audiences aren't hindered from attending due to cost prohibitive ticket prices.

Our industry is suffering in many ways, including emotionally and mentally, and morale takes a deep dive downwards when our leaders aren't seen to be working hard to agitate for our valued and talented musicians.

As a final point, valuing art in our society is of paramount importance, otherwise the greatest musicians in NSW will be unheard over the noise of the pokies.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry.

Kind regards, Simone Waddell

Want to get access to my music, online shows, insights into the miraculous creative process of songwriting and more?

Join my AMAZING Music Membership here: <https://tinyurl.com/y762tqf8>

Master of Music (Performance)
Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Bachelor of Arts in Contemporary Music
Southern Cross University & Berklee College of Music

www.simonewaddell.com

Singer, Songwriter, Recording Artist, Speaker
Founder of "YOU HAVE A VOICE" Coaching, Workshops, and Retreats.

Press Kit: <https://onepagelink.com/simonewaddell/>

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1202-5697>