

To: The Honorable Paul Green, MLC, Chair  
Re: Submission to the inquiry into the music and arts economy in New South Wales

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23 February 2018

Dear Mr Green

## **The right to dance is a fundamental human right**

### **Overview**

It is the view of this broad-based group of signatories that a vibrant music and arts scene is an important economic driver that significantly contributes to the liveability of some of the best cities and regions in the world.

Currently Sydney ranks poorly on many international arts and culture surveys:

- The Economist Global Liveability Report 2017: Melbourne #1; Adelaide #6; Sydney did not make the list.
- 2017 Business Insider World's 30 Best Cities for Art, Food and Music: Sydney does not appear.
- 2018 Time Out Global City Index: Out of 32 cities surveyed, Melbourne ranked #4, and Sydney ranked #28.

If we are to achieve the stated ambition of the NSW government to be the cultural capital of the region we need to recognise that music, arts and culture are significant contributors to the economy (as well as to the quality of life, to individual wellbeing, and to social cohesion).

It is the role of government to create an enabling environment that will give key participants in this ecology (citizenry, private and public organisations) appropriate incentives to collaborate and act in productive ways.

Recently, the night-time economy and questions of policing and licensing laws have taken centre-stage. We believe that this should not distract us from the fact that music and the arts economy is also part of a daytime and twilight economy.

Considered then as a 24/7 asset, a vibrant music and arts economy should be:

- prioritised as a resource to be enjoyed safely (for the city and all its residents);
- considered in light of city planning, neighbourhood and regional development, transport, as well as the State of NSW's brand position and related marketing;
- economically sustainable;
- considered by government to be central to the future development, maintenance, and growth of NSW; and
- recognised as a vital part of a creative ecosystem.

We believe that the NSW government is currently falling short in its obligation to the electorate to provide the broad environmental conditions that enable creativity to be nurtured and ultimately succeed.

Without ignoring the intrinsic cultural value of creative works generally, this failing is manifestly evident in the music sector. Here the current regulatory environment has contributed to a 40 per cent decline in attendance revenue in live music venues in the CBD in recent years. This has reduced the opportunity for artists to build audiences and sustainable careers. The pipeline of musical works by NSW-based artists is being depleted in comparison to previous generations. If this is not addressed the flow-on effect will be a reduction of the \$1.2 billion that live music contributes to the Australian economy each year.

## Recommendations

While we recognise that there are multiple jurisdictions and frameworks that need to be coordinated, we would like to make the following recommendations:

- **Assignment of Ministerial oversight to create an enabling environment.** The assignment of ministerial responsibility for the night-time economy (including live music, entertainment and the performing arts), which needs oversight and coordination across multiple sectors and government agencies. For example, aligning the strategies and action plans of multiple LGAs where appropriate;
- **New incentives; removal of disincentives.** Provision of the right incentives, and removal of current disincentives, to participation. New incentives could include tax concessions, grants, training and employment schemes. Current disincentives include fees and complex application and approval processes.
- **Planning.** (a) Planning controls should be amended to encourage the conversion of all kinds of premises (other than those zoned residential) into small-scale arts venues, without the need for development applications. (b) Planning controls should be amended to require new residential developments within 100 metres of existing entertainment venues to assess noise levels and design and build to manage those levels. (c) Transport for NSW should work with local councils, local businesses and resident groups to develop integrated transport strategies for significant night-time entertainment and commercial districts.

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## Signatories

- **Anna Burns**, General Manager, [Future Classic](#)
- **Clare Holland**, Managing Director, [FBI Radio](#)
- **Esther Anatolitis**, Executive Director, [National Association for the Visual Arts](#)
- **Jane Slingo**, Executive Producer, [Electronic Music Conference](#)
- **Justine Baker**, Chief Operating Officer, [Solotel](#)
- **Kerry Glasscock**, Director, [Sydney Fringe Festival](#)
- **Mark Gerber**, CEO and Founder, [Oxford Arts Factory](#)
- **Matt Rule**, Founding Director, [The Music & Booze Co](#)
- **Michael Rodrigues**, Managing Director, [Time Out Australia](#)
- **Richard Adamson**, Founder and Director, [Young Henrys](#); President, [Newtown Precinct Business Association](#)
- **Stanley Quek**, Executive Chairman, [Greencliff](#)