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ACT 2902

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Ms Mary Porter AM MLA
Chair
Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and
Territory and Municipal Services
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Civic Square, London Circuit
Canberra, ACT 2600
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Submission Regarding the Inquiry of Live Community Events

Dear Ms Porter,

I am a young, concerned resident of Canberra, who enjoys going to our inner city to experience and support live music at several venues.

It is a worrying fact that current ACT legislation will often rule against well known, established venues, in favour of complaints generated by tenants of newer residential developments. Our live music culture in Canberra is in danger of being all but eliminated by these tenants, who would have purchased their apartments fully aware they were purchasing property in the middle of the city, an area where noise is to be expected.

In February of this year, some 20 000 Melbourne citizens took to the streets in protest of the Victorian government's new liquor licensing laws, which effectively gave venues the heavy burden of reducing alcohol fuelled violence. New security requirements on venues and increased licensing fees meant that one iconic venue, The Tote, was closed. In response, 20 000 people protested, and the one-sided laws have since been revised.

These noise complaints that are at the heart of the contention over this topic, all seem to suggest an approach which equals that of the Victorian government's with regards to the one-sided nature of their suggestions. Suggestions so far have mainly placed the onus directly on the venue's owners, requiring the venues to invest in soundproofing. Andrew Mottram's submission to the Inquiry into Live Community Events provides three very sensible suggestions I will list here:

“I strongly feel that the current legislation be reviewed with a view to safeguarding our existing music venues. My recommendations are as follows:

- Firstly, I support the recommendation that Order of Occupancy principles be considered when reviewing complaints regarding Canberra's entertainment venues.
- Secondly, I support the recommendation that all new residential development which occurs near existing music and entertainment venues – be they night clubs, bars, restaurants, community halls, outdoor entertainment sites, or stadiums – be mandated to provide high quality soundproofing, to avoid future conflicts over noise and to avoid future threats to Canberra's music venues and music culture.

- Lastly, I support the ACT Democrats' recommendation that the ACT Government contribute funding for the retrofitting of existing residential buildings to provide soundproofing that is adequate for the building's location. Residential buildings that are within the CBD or close to entertainment districts should take priority for such funding."¹

In the past few decades, Canberra has managed to carve a small but integral niche in the unique culture of Australia's music scene. Boasting proud venues such as the ANU Bar, and the Transit Bar, Canberra has a vibrant nightlife, and it is live music which makes a large contribution to the quality of live community events.

If the legislation is reviewed and changed badly, then these events will suffer, and as a direct result, so will Canberra's citizens. Already, Canberra is seen by some as lacking in any decent entertainment; if anything, promotion and subsidies for existing venues, and encouragement of new venues is needed.

Please help our live music scene!

Yours sincerely,
Madeline Fairhall-Wald

¹ Andrew Mottram, *Submission To The Inquiry Into Live Community Events*. Retrieved from <http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/downloads/submissions/15%20Andrew%20Mottram.pdf> on [7.03.10]