



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE COVID-19 2021 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

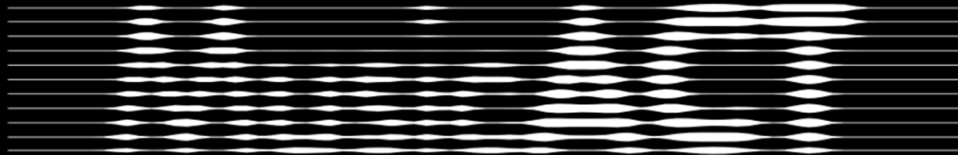
Ms Elizabeth Lee MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the COVID-19 2021 pandemic response

**Submission Number: 17**

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18 November 2021

**MusicACT**  
**COVID-19 Select Committee - Public hearing**

MusicACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people who have made music on this land for many thousands of years.

MusicACT is the contemporary music industry representative organisation for the Australian Capital Territory and is a member of the peak body the Australian Music Industry Network (AMIN).

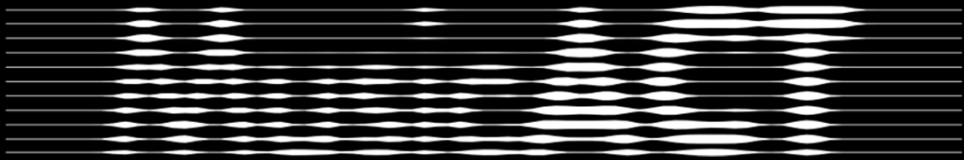
We receive funding support from the ACT Government, the Commonwealth, APRA AMCOS and Molonglo. We do not, and will not for obvious reasons into the foreseeable future, seek financial support from artists and music industry professionals and businesses, they have either gone bankrupt or are just hanging on, utterly skint.

Why the music industry and all its people are precious and important contributors to our cultural, social and economic lives does not require a lengthy justification. At a fundamental level, we all know the passion and energy music creation brings and how music both live and recorded creates joy everywhere.

The Australian live music and entertainment industry is in crisis. In dollar terms consulting giant PWC found, "Australia's live and recorded music market was valued at A\$1.1 billion in 2020, a decline of nearly 39 percent on the previous year, **driven almost entirely by the suspension of the live music industry** which shed 90 percent of its revenue at A\$86 million." 1.

Most music industry experts believe this PWC analysis significantly understates the financial implications, it does not cover 2021, let alone the yet to be measured negative employment, cultural and social impacts.

Unfortunately we do not have accurate assessments of the size and firm indicators as to cultural, social and economic health of the ACT music industry. This is an industry resourcing question we would welcome assistance with. I can tell you this, MusicACT has over 570 Music Pro members, these are musicians, music industry professionals and business owners who are all distinguished by their professional intent. There are over 1,100 APRA AMCOS registered ACT based songwriters, these are people registered to be paid performance royalties across ACT, Australia and the world. MusicACT also has a core group of 92 live music venue managers and business operators who we support and liaise with continually. For example MusicACT have assisted with cumulative funding grant applications in excess of \$1.2 M

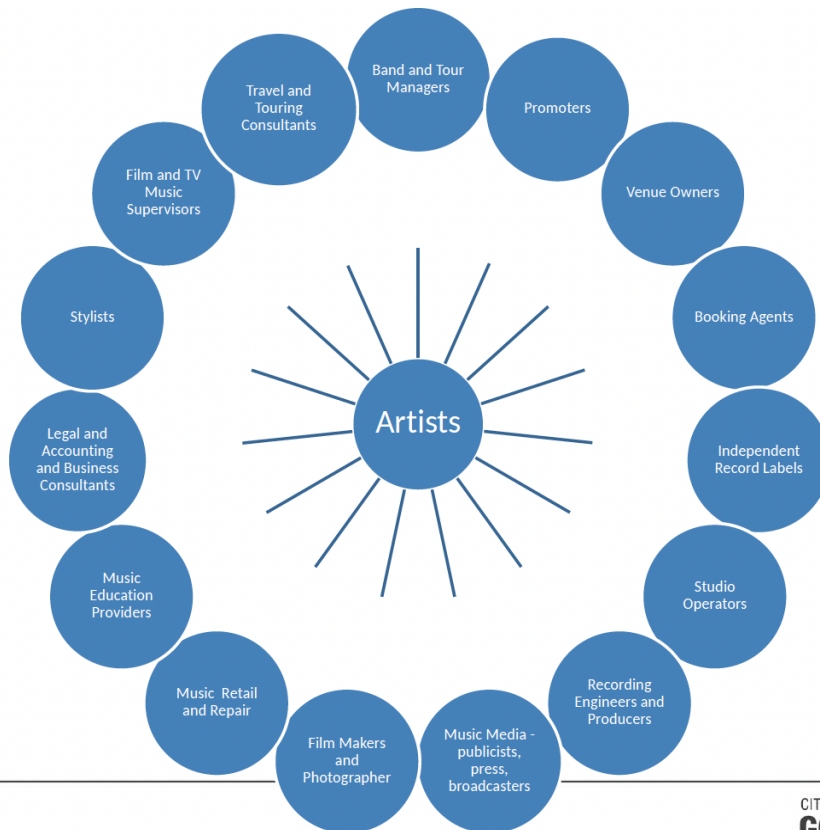


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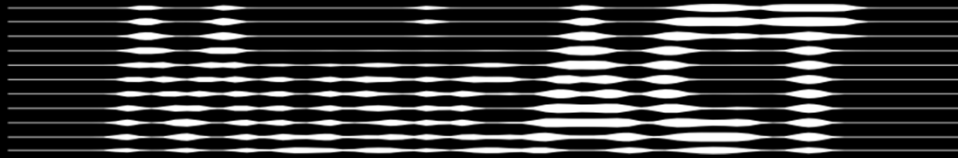
I'm saying all this because I believe there is a perception that the music industry in this town is not significant. Did you know that today a proudly Canberra based artist, [REDACTED] was only this morning awarded Triple J's Album of year and has seven 2021 ARIA award nominations. This does not happen in a vacuum. The ACT has amongst the best educated, most progressive artists and bands and has produced numerous industry leading figures, including Dave Ruby Howe at Triple J Unearthed, Ryan Sabet at Kicks Entertainment and Rod Yates at Jaxsta, just to name a few.

Throughout Australia, governments during the pandemic have woken up to the size and importance of the music and entertainment industries as positive cultural, social and economic drivers and as they have attempted to provide support through very difficult times and in doing so they have discovered how complex and interrelated the music industry ecosystem is. It is one industry that is clearly driven by passion and creativity and yet is determined to, unlike most other cultural sectors, to achieve self sufficiency and business success.

Here is a simple artist centric model of the vast web of businesses, services and roles put together by Gold Coast City Council. MusicACT's professional development plan sets out to grow the capacity of artists and emerging professionals as presented here, and I'll have more on the Gold Coast City's approach below.



CITY OF  
**GOLD COAST**



MusicACT wants to impress on you why a local live scene is important economically for artists, and everyone else you now know is involved.

**First to be hit, the last to begin to recover**, that is the live music industry experience on the pandemic roller coaster.

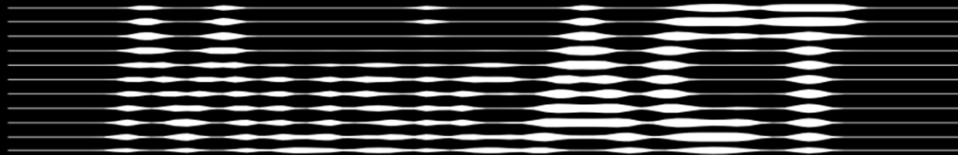
Furthermore, we now know after a succession of lockdowns that once the reopening starts, live music venues in particular have been unable to achieve viable capacities readily as social distancing measures are wound back, and inconsistently across state and territory jurisdictions. In the ACT 50% capacity for indoor venues was the norm right up until when our most recent lockdown was declared in August. For this opening up this remains the case subject to the somewhat complicated ACT Health exemption application process currently underway.

It is an easily understood financial one, and it impacts emerging independent artists seeking to build and widen their audience base through to our leading and internationally renowned promoters and touring companies.

Put simply it is the universal music industry business plan: "invest, record, release, **tour**, recoup and repeat".

With no touring income from playing live, typically from a national tour no longer viable thanks to just one state or territory's lockdown action rendering it unviable, to a now pervasive and dreaded loss of confidence, where most artists and touring businesses have run down what modest reserves they had. So, limited or no funds are available to kick start the cycle... "invest, record, release, **tour**, recoup and repeat". And skilled, talented artists and industry workers are giving up and leaving the live music and entertainment industry.

Here in the ACT I'd like to acknowledge the efforts of the small team artsACT and who have worked across the ACT government to help deliver important relief through funding initiatives including Homefront, Amp It Up! and indeed the funding MusicACT receives of approximately \$120,000 per year along with other sources. This hasn't been without issues including delays in current funding announcements due to what we believe are ACT government and artsACT's teams being stretched by work the demands of the pandemic response. artsACT we believe needs more resources. We also think the music industry, as it is considered in other jurisdictions, is more than an "arts or cultural" portfolio sector consideration, rather the music industry is a driver for wider economic outcomes, best encapsulated in the concept of the Night Time Economy or NTE.



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I'd also like to acknowledge the progress the ACT government is making on the creation of Entertainment Areas, a long sought and fought for reform advocated by MusicACT. The last ACT budget saw \$250,000 committed to work on the creating Entertainment Areas where it is hoped appropriate regulatory and planning reform will open up and reverse the decline in live music, entertainment and night time economy businesses that we have witnessed for over a decade.

I'd also like the committee to note and to acquaint itself with what other jurisdictions have undertaken during the pandemic to enable a rapid recovery of the music industry and NTE business.

**QLD** - three entertainment areas now declared, \$37 M plus in music industry support

**NSW** - 500 amendments to planning, liquor and environmental legislation and regulation to enable live music, NTE and creation of entertainment precincts, \$24 M direct live music industry support plus \$200 M indirect arts and cultural support.

**Vic** - Cannot totally quantify, but in excess of \$100 M in direct support, please go to the the Victoria Music Development Office <https://www.vmdo.com.au/covid19-grantsandinitiatives>, plus legislative reform to protect live music venues and enable creation of entertainment areas. Melbourne is now recognised as one of the world's great live music cities, This did not happen by chance, it was planned and worked on. And now just two days ago the Victorian government announced \$20 M in cancellation insurance underwriting for touring acts.

And this is just a limited survey. WA, SA and NT are all moving to enable and support live music, live entertainment and NTE growth through various funding programs and reforms as they enact their respective pandemic recovery plans.

Further to the work already being done here in the ACT, how could we step up and accelerate recovery and growth to reap the benefits of the already capable latent music scene and its industry?

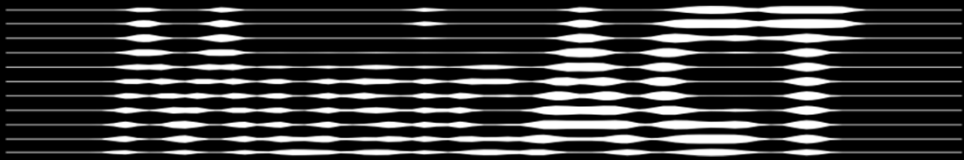
Look at the APRA AMCOS led Open MIC or Open Music Industry Conference 5 point recovery plan:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fIDpXMI0zqwiCoQAEmb3laMxB1q99QSEmxuSGg3GqCo/edit?pli=1>

This is also attached to this submission.

Look at the Gold Coast City's Music Action Plan. It is a plan for a whole of government approach to music industry growth:

<https://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/Council-region/Future-plans-budget/Plans-policies-strategies/Our-plans/Music-Action-Plan>



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These two plans strongly indicate the potential and where we can go in the ACT as we chart our recovery from the pandemic.

On an exciting and positive closing note, the ACT music industry is pulling itself up by the bootstraps, with help from Amp It UP! funding. MusicACT also has now a direct line into how many gigs are happening after we launched last Friday **What's On? Lots On** or **WOLO**. This is an open access open source live entertainment and gig guide, we think the first in the world, where artists and venues can enter their listings and importantly it is not impacted by commercial or advertising considerations. This was funded thanks to the Commonwealth's Live Music Australia program and a lot of sweat capital from [REDACTED] MusicACT's program Manager and the legendary [REDACTED] at BMA magazine.



Daniel Ballantyne  
Director  
MusicACT  
**Attachment**

**Open MIC (Music Industry Community)  
5 Point Reopening Plan Sept 2021**

The Australian live music and entertainment industry is worth \$16bn to the national economy. Operating nationally and internationally it includes large and small businesses, sole traders and employs 90,000+ FTE workers. From stadiums, to pubs, clubs, bars and nightclubs, festivals and events, indoor and outdoor, our industry is core to Australia's cultural heart and is a driver of local and national economic activity. Australia is a music powerhouse with enormous export potential. Local, national and international performances and tours take time to organise, are logistically complicated and involve navigating a myriad of Federal, State, Territory and local government legislation and regulations - and that was before COVID.

The Live Music and Entertainment industry is heavily and immediately impacted by:

- a) Lockdowns
- b) Border closures
- c) Capacity restrictions; and
- d) Inconsistent application of state and national policies.

The above impacts will continue for the foreseeable future, undermining any remaining confidence and capacity in future planning, forcing artist and entertainment businesses to close and forcing workers to find alternative employment or welfare.

The closure of venues, threat to confidence and loss of skilled workers places the industry at risk of being unable to trade out of the impacts of COVID-19 and rebuild on its own.

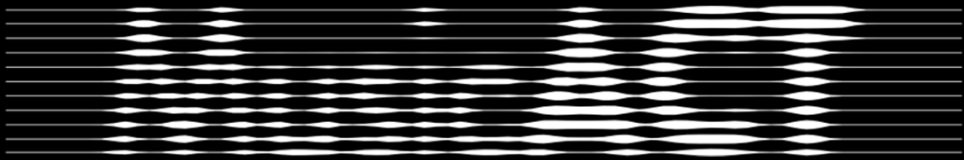
In proactively and positively addressing the above impacts, the Live Music and Entertainment industry have created and agreed to a 5 Point Re-Opening Plan.

Critical to **survival** and **future confidence** in rebuilding the **capacity** of our industry we urgently call on Federal, State, Territory, and Local authorities to engage with our industry and act.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS ARE CRITICAL TO RE-OPENING THE LIVE AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY:

1. Continue to provide **crisis support** through SUPPORT ACT, tailored one-off grants to provide targeted support, and ensure existing relief packages support impacted artists, individuals, sole traders and music businesses.
2. Ensure live music and industry event artists, individuals, sole traders and music businesses are eligible and are able to apply for government Covid-19 Financial Assistance **Wage Subsidy** support packages until live music in venues and outdoors is operating at normal capacity.
3. Ensure artists, musicians, event professionals and staff are eligible for **rapid access approvals** where employment requires travel within and between states and territories.
4. **Best Practice and consistent state and territory based 'COVID safe' policies** across all like indoor and outdoor events, including sport, music and theatre.
5. Build **confidence** and **capacity** by establishing a government-backed Business Interruption Program for current and future live music and entertainment events.





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**SIGNED BY:**

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- *APRA AMCOS*
- *Arts Industry Council of South Australia*
- *Association of Artist Managers (AAM)*
- *Australasian Music Publishers' Association Limited (AMPAL)*
- *Australian Festival Association (AFA)*
- *Australian Independent Record Labels Association (AIR)*
- *Australian Live Music Business Council (ALMBC)*
- *Australian Music Centre (AMC)*
- *Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA)*
- *Bar Open and The Tote*
- *BIGSOUND*
- *Catherine Haridy Management*
- *Club Music Advisory Group (CMAG)*
- *Country Music Association of Australia (CMAA)*
- *CrewCare*
- *Darren Heinrich, Musician and Music Teacher*
- *Electronic Music Conference (EMC)*
- *Eleven: A Music Company*
- *Festivals Adelaide*
- *George Maple, song writer and performing artist*
- *Grown Yourself Up*
- *John Watson Management*
- *Laing Entertainment*
- *Limelight*
- *Live Music Office (LMO)*
- *Live Nation*
- *Live Performance Australia (LPA)*
- *Marriner Group*
- *Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA)*
- *Melbourne Recital Centre*
- *Mushroom Group*
- *MusicACT*
- *Music NSW*
- *Music NT*
- *Music SA*
- *Music Tasmania*
- *Music Victoria*
- *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music Office (NATSIMO)*
- *Phonographic Performance Company of Australia (PPCA)*
- *Q Music*
- *Secret Sounds Group*
- *Select Music*
- *Sony/ATV Music Publishing*
- *Sounds Australia*
- *Support Act*
- *TEG*
- *Unified Music Group*
- *Untitled Group*
- *Warm Water*
- *West Australian Music (WAM)*