

13 April 2010

Miss 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
committees@act.gov.au

Dear Ms Porter,

I am writing to make a submission to the Inquiry into Live Community Events.

I have been a lifelong resident of Canberra and regularly attend live music and other live events in the area, as well as being a member of bands that have previously played in Canberra. I understand that in recent years noise complaints have been a significant barrier to live music in Canberra and have contributed to the closure of several venues. The live music scene in Australia already suffers many difficulties that prevent it from growing and contributing to the vibrant culture of cities. This can be seen in the changing liquor licensing legislation around Australia, most recently in Melbourne where the changes caused the closure of several venues. Another example of difficulties encountered by live music is the decline of the Metal for the Brain festival, held in Canberra from 1991 - 2006. This was the largest heavy music festival in Australia and I understand the rising cost of public liability insurance played a major factor in its demise.

Live music is an important part of the vibrant culture and nightlife in any city. It provides many benefits, such as entertainment and jobs (for musicians, sound technicians, venue owners etc.) as well as making Canberra a much more interesting city to a younger demographic of people. In my role as a member of the emergency services in Canberra for the past five years, as well as a regular attendee of live music events, I can say anecdotally that there are significantly less problems due to alcohol intoxication and/or violence at live music events than at other licenced venues in the ACT. In the Canberra Plan (2008), it states that "*The ACT Government will continue to support and facilitate the future of Canberra as a vibrant city, while also improving major infrastructure and neighbourhood renewal and regeneration.*" As a part of this plan, I believe that the ACT government supporting local live music venues is very important.

I believe that this inquiry offers a great opportunity to strengthen the live music scene in Canberra and vastly improve current legislation, as well as providing support for residents in built-up areas. With respect to the terms of reference of the inquiry, I suggest that:

- Order of occupancy legislation should be considered when handling noise complaints.

- Building codes be amended so that in future all new residential developments or entertainment venues, are required to have significant sound proofing and insulation, such as double glazing. This would benefit people as it suppresses noise and the insulation/energy rating of the apartment could be improved.
- In areas where there are significant noise complaints currently, the government could offer subsidies to improve the sound proofing/insulation of venues and/or residential developments **if** they are currently inadequate.
- In line with the submission of ACT democrats, the time for noise levels to be reduced at venues on Friday and Saturday nights should be extended from 10pm to midnight. This would assist the growth of live music venues but cause minimal problems as the majority of people do not have to work on the weekend.

Canberra has seen significant urban development in recent years including a significant modernisation and improvement of the city centre, as well as the construction of many residential apartment buildings. I believe that these improvements are fantastic, and certainly give Canberra a much more vibrant and “city” feel, but they shouldn’t come at the cost of already established cultural events such as live music. Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely,

Andrew Muller