

From: Committees
Sent: Monday, 3 May 2010 11:57 AM
To: Derigo, NicolaT (LA)
Subject: FW: Submission to Inquiry into Live Community Events

From: Andrew n Sandy [mailto:]
Sent: Sunday, 2 May 2010 10:27 PM
To: Committees
Subject: Submission to Inquiry into Live Community Events

Submission to ACT Legislative Assembly Inquiry into Live Community Events

Dear Ms Porter

ACT Government support for local live music has always been welcome in the past, through means such as annual arts grants or inclusion of local bands in sponsored public events. However, to complement such measures and ensure a healthy and viable base of local performers and bands, it is also very important for the ACT government to support an environment which enables local performers to ply their trade and develop their skills through playing live across a range of venues.

There have been well known examples in Canberra where inner city live music venues have effectively been forced to close down due to noise complaints by neighbouring tenants who moved in after the music venue had already been in operation (Cafe Macchiato and the Gypsy Bar in East Row around 2002, Waldorf and Toast in the Boulevard around 2008). The Transit Bar is now reportedly under threat again from noise complaints from Waldorf, despite having been in prior operation as a live music venue for many years under different names (Church Bar, Aree Bar etc). This has been particularly unjust in cases where the operation of the music venue has predated the invasion of the complaining neighbours. And in any case, the attitude of the complainants is unrealistic and offensive in terms of their expectations of combining suburban quiet with the advantages of inner city living. Anyone who has spent time in inner Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane - let alone major overseas capitals - would know that cities are noisy places! Inner cities feature people gathering in numbers late at night in loud entertainment venues in the CBD. Why should inner city dwellers in Canberra expect different treatment? It is ironic that hotels such as the Waldorf trade on their proximity to vibrant local venues, while seeking simultaneously to have them suppressed.

Canberra is smaller than the other cities listed above and has a smaller critical mass of live music venues. In the past, closure of a single venue has a disproportionate impact on the vibrancy of our local scene compared to other cities. Hence it is important that music venues operate in a supportive environment which allows local cultural expression through arts and music. Groups such as the Canberra Music Club should be recognised for the significant private effort put into fostering a healthy

local scene through exploring alternative arrangements for venues and public liability insurance. There are numerous local performers or bands who have started in small Canberra pubs and gone onto national and international recognition. Over the years some examples include Falling Joys, Sidewinder, Young and the Restless (indie rock), Eric Bogle and Fred Smith (folk), Alchemist (metal), Bumblebeez (rap), the Gadflys, Doug Anthony All Stars etc etc. Other iconic Australian bands have had Canberra connections through members growing up and/or studying in Canberra (Midnight Oil, Skyhooks, the Church, You Am I etc). There are also hundreds of unsung performers playing locally who contribute to a lively and interesting Canberra culture. There is no question we have the talent here to shine nationally and beyond. It is a shame to see this stifled and subjected to unrealistic noise restrictions.

Overall, ACT the health of live music in Canberra would be enhanced by:

- a realistic and fair approach to noise level issues around live music venues in inner city areas, not pandering to unrealistic expectations of those who have chosen to buy into inner city living
- support for development of public venue/s appropriate for local performances (i.e. appropriate location, capacity, soundproofing)
- support for events promoting local talent such as the Fringe Festival, in their own right rather than forcibly combined with very worthy but less compatible events such as the National Folk Festival
- continued and enhanced support for inclusion of local performers in ACT government events (Party In The Park, live at lunchtime in Garema Place, new year concert, Australia Day concert), including appropriate levels of payment for local acts
- increased use of a range of suitable and imaginative public spaces for sponsored live music events (Civic Square, Commonwealth Park amphitheatre, Stage 88, Garema Place, Mt Ainslie, Gorman House... and no doubt many more)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Andrew Rowell

Lynham ACT