



**ACT DEMOCRATS**

**A Submission from the Australian Democrats (ACT Division)**

to

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, PUBLIC WORKS AND  
TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

*Inquiry into Live Community Events*

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**ACT Democrats submission to the Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services,**  
*Inquiry into Live Community Events*

This inquiry is about Live Community Events, or specifically, “That this Assembly: refers the issue of supporting live music and events in our community to the Standing Committee”.

**Noise:**

The ACT Democrats have primarily addressed our submission to point (c) in the Terms of Reference in relation to sound insulation. Other forms of noise pollution are not covered by our submission.

The ACT Democrats believe that a vibrant and diverse entertainment sector is an important part of Canberra’s cultural attractiveness and artistic diversity.

The problems that have led to this inquiry being established have arisen because of a number of factors, principally;

1. Entertainment noise levels (music) have increased over the last 10-20 years;
2. Residential land use has moved much closer to entertainment venues over the last 10-20 years;
3. Sound insulation legislation has failed to keep pace with these changes.

Canberra has numerous festivals and fairs that are a venue for live music and various other forms of entertainment that create noise. (Multicultural Festival, Fringe Festival, Jazz Festival, Summerfests, etc) These festivals and events are supported by most Canberrans, attract many visitors to the City, and are a reflection of the strong artistic community that thrives in Canberra. One of the prerequisites of a continuing strength in this artistic community is the ability to practise and present live performances, especially live music in commercial venues on a regular basis.

Traditional entertainment areas (Civic, Town Centres, Old Canberra Inn, Gold Creek Homestead, EPIC, Canberra Stadium, AIS Arena, Manuka and Kingston commercial centres) need to maintain their entertainment options and cultures, and Canberra needs to cater for the whole range of expertise from beginners to professionals, for practice venues as well as major events, and for a wide range of artistic styles. There seems no better way of “supporting live music and events in our community” than to cater for regular commercial events of small, medium and large scale.

The option of separation of entertainment noise from residential areas seems to no longer be available. Canberra has already changed to a place where many people reside in or near commercial centres where we are also promoting a more vibrant night life than has been the case in past years. Unfortunately, this change has occurred without the foresight and planning that would have avoided the current conflicts and the need for this enquiry.

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Canberra needs to catch up with the change that has occurred and cater for future change. Because of the past legislative failure, it now seems inequitable that the entire cost of retro-fitting of the required sound insulation should fall on current building occupiers (both noise producers and noise recipients) and we believe that there should be a government financial assistance programme to help achieve the desired outcomes.

The ACT Democrats support the current noise legislation that permits higher noise levels in commercial centres than in traditional residential areas. However, we feel that on Friday and Saturday nights the time that noise levels must be reduced in these areas should be **midnight**, rather than 10pm. Also, noise levels within venues should comply with current Occupational Health and Safety standards.

The ACT government needs to provide a noise insulation solution. We need new legislation for both residential buildings and entertainment venues, where these exist near each other, to create noise barriers that allow both purposes to co-exist without conflict.

Noise insulation is also heat insulation, so we believe that the required new legislative insulation proposals need to cater for both noise and heat, and can be taken as part of the modernisation of our urban infrastructure for global warming purposes as well as for soundproofing purposes.

In Summary, the ACT Democrats recommendations for action are:

1. All new residential buildings near existing and proposed live music and entertainment venues to have improved sound insulation standards for all walls, ceilings, doors and windows.
2. All existing and proposed live music and entertainment venues to have improved sound insulation standards for all walls, ceilings, doors and windows.
3. The ACT Government should assist with the funding of an insulation retro-fitting scheme for existing residential buildings and music venues as appropriate to allow for a vibrant local music scene.

#### **Safety and Physical Security:**

The ACT Democrats encourage provision of licensed, regulated in-house security at entertainment venues and events. This is both for safety aspects and helping to minimise patron noise when entering or leaving a venue or event.

Further, we support a visible community police presence and police shopfronts in areas such as Civic and Town Centres. And a more open, safer and well lit urban environment to help reduce crime and promote an environment of physical security.

#### **Other issues:**

The ACT Democrats support the concept of community advertising space, such as

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bollards, both within existing and new developments.

We also support the provision of late night public transport options and express a preference for expansion of existing ACTION/Deanes and *Night-Ride* style services.

We encourage the greater provision of all age community events.

The ACT Democrats thank you for your consideration of our submission.

Yours sincerely,

*D. M. Churchill*

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