

From: Simon Milman
Sent: Sunday, 11 July 2010 9:41 PM
To: Committees
Subject: Inquiry into live music in the ACT

To Whom It May Concern,

Live music in the ACT is struggling to keep its head above water at the moment. The gentrification of urban areas has brought residents into areas where live music is performed. These newcomers are then complaining about the amount of noise in these urban areas. The net result is that venues are being shut down (for example Toast in Civic) and live music is being squeezed out of the picture.

Would anyone tolerate the reverse scenario? What if venues were moved out to suburbia and through lobbying slowly squeezed the residents out of their area, forcing them to move? Somehow I don't think this would be allowed to occur, yet the logic is the same.

There needs to be zoning legislation, so that certain areas are earmarked as entertainment areas. These entertainment areas would factor in live music and aim to encourage its proliferation, and minimize residential development in these zones.

If residents want a quiet place to live they should consider where they are moving to. Moving into a residential development next door to a pub is obviously not going to be a smart move. Instead of considering this, these new residents complain about noise and spoil an established live music venue. (P.J. O'Reilly's, Civic)

The question must also be asked - why are residential developments being built in established, noisy urban areas? What sort of forward planning is this? There needs to be a balance between the different users of urban areas. Or do we want a homogenous urban sprawl bereft of culture? That seems to be the direction the town planners are taking us.

Organisations such as The Canberra Musicians Club are helping the Canberra music scene, but even they are finding it difficult to secure independent venues. Initially holding events at Corroboree Park Hall, there were noise complaints from a local resident. The Club was told that the decibel reading outside the hall could not exceed 45 decibels. Given that the average volume of a conversation is 35 decibels, you can see this is a ridiculous request.

The Club searched for months and finally found MacGregor Hall in Civic, a venue used by many community groups.

After several months of running successful events the hall is to be demolished next month, to make way for international student accommodation (a far more lucrative venture I'm sure).

Once again there will be a lack of a central independent space for music events in the CBD.

To summarize;

- We need zoning legislation to protect the interests of residents, live music venues and all users of urban spaces

- We need more considered town planning - lets get rid of the genius who wanted to clean up Garema Place by banning shop front displays

- Noise pollution legislation such as the one mentioned above could do with some revision

- The community demands centralized, multi-use spaces in urban areas for activities such as dance groups, live music etc

This is not just happening in the ACT, it is happening in Sydney and Melbourne and to

well established venues such as The Rainbow Hotel in Fitzroy. There are now fewer venues. not more,

than there were ten years ago. We need to plan ahead and think about what sort of city we want

to live in. I would like to live in a city which has sufficient commercial and community venues in

which the live music scene can thrive, and whose urban areas are a celebration of cultural diversity and community.

Yours Sincerely,

Simon Milman.