

From: mechanicaldoll on behalf of Kate Walton
Sent: Wednesday, 7 April 2010 10:27 AM
To: Committees
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into Live Community Events
Dear Ms Porter,

As a life-long Canberra resident and live music fan, I am writing to you to voice my opinion with regards to your inquiry into live community events.

While I am not a musician, I am a frequent concert-goer and a live music photographer. Despite its flaws, the Canberra music scene is something that our city cannot afford to lose. It is already in poor shape, due to the closure of important venues such as Toast and the interstate relocation of numerous well-known local bands, and the situation can only worsen if noise complaints are given priority over culture.

Canberra is a city that already has the unfortunate reputation as being dull, boring, and lacking in culture. Young people are increasingly put off the idea of moving to Canberra to study or work, yet these people are exactly who Canberra needs to expand our cultural capital. Every year, I have witnessed the flight of Canberra's young creative types and music lovers for culturally-rich cities such as Melbourne. I am sorry to say that I, too, am often tempted to leave, even though I feel that Canberra does not deserve its bad reputation.

The major issue at stake appears to be that of noise. The owners and tenants of buildings such as the Waldorf Hotel are one notable example. To be frank, it strikes me as rather ironic that residents who choose to live in the centre of the city are complaining about the very elements that one would presume they moved into that location for. People choose to live in areas such as Civic because it is where the cultural value is - that is, where the city's best shops, cafes, restaurants, live music venues, nightclubs, bars, pubs, and cinemas are located.

I read with interest the submissions to this inquiry - in one, the writer, a resident of the Waldorf, writes that "the people who have invested in property ... in Civic did so under the knowledge and belief that they could enjoy the hustle of city life". It is intriguing to me, then, how residents such as this feel it is possible to participate in the city life only when they wish to do so. There are downsides and upsides to all residential locations. If residents such as the one identified above wished to live in the peace and quiet, they would have chosen to live in the suburbs. Yet they chose the vibrant hubbub of city life instead. Perhaps residents need to realise that they cannot have it all.

Venues such as Transit Bar, the Waldorf's current target for noise complaints, are already sound proofed and adhere to all legal requirements. The onus to protect their tenants from noise should be on the hotels and residential buildings themselves. If the Waldorf's owners are naive enough to believe that no sound proofing is required for hotels located in the city centre, they need to reconsider their position. It is impossible to completely sound proof a live music venue - bar, of course, shutting it down, which is precisely what will happen to Transit Bar if the Waldorf persists in its persecution of live music. The Waldorf's expectations are unreasonable, unfair and illogical, and

they, along with all other residential buildings, need to recognise that they, too, are responsible for protecting residents from excessive noise. Ultimately, venues and residential buildings need to work together to bring about the best possible solution for everyone involved.

I am proud to be a resident of Canberra, but I am tired of being forced to defend its cultural life, especially when certain elements threaten to destroy it. I wish for Canberra to become the vibrant, interesting, creative city we all know it can be. As residents, my friends and I are already doing all we can to help this come about. It is time for the ACT Government to properly support us. This is a prime opportunity to do so.

Best regards,
Kate Walton