

Mr Gabriel Kite-Gilmour

13th March, 2010

Ms 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
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Submission Regarding the Inquiry of Live Community Events

Dear Ms Porter,

I am writing to you as a life long resident of the ACT, in relation to the ACT Legislative Assembly's Inquiry into Live Community Events.

In an increasingly economically focused society, I recognise that the value of music and the arts is not something that can easily be quantified. However, whilst I personally believe the cultural value of music and the arts extends far beyond any economic attribute, it is possible to demonstrate that supporting live music in Canberra also serves to benefit Canberra economically. I have observed that the strength (or lack thereof) of the live music scene in Canberra, has been a major factor in the decision to leave for other Australian/Overseas cities, that many of my friends and associates have made over the years. In these cases the health, education, and other local resources invested into each individual to help them to reach a productive working age, are not able to be reciprocated through a reinvestment into the city. Put simply, each individual that leaves Canberra is no longer able to contribute to the local economy. This anecdotal evidence suggests that an individual's decision to stay in Canberra, and their subsequent ability to contribute economically, is often linked to the strength of the live music scene. The result of imposing restrictions on live music venues is that the number of live community events is reduced. This weakens the live music culture, which in turn encourages individuals to leave Canberra, ultimately resulting in a reduction in the number of people contributing to the local economy.

I also note that the similarities in the impact between reforms of liquor licensing laws and potential sound restrictions has already been raised in previous submissions. What I would like to add to this argument, is the apparent contradictions in outcomes that the two proposals raise. Specifically, I am confused as to how the local government can claim to be concerned about reducing violence and anti-social behavior through liquor licensing reforms, whilst simultaneously considering restrictions that would reduce the capacity of non-violent music venues to continue providing safe environments for music lovers. The 'binge-drinking culture' as it is often referred to, is fostered in venues where the focus is on drinking, not live music. In the decade I have been attending clubs and live music performances, I have observed violent behavior frequently in clubs that do not host live music events, as the focus in those venues is on the consumption of alcohol. Rarely have I seen violence (alcohol related or otherwise) at live music venues, and have never witnessed a violent act at 'Transit Bar', 'Hippo Lounge', or the now late 'Toast'. Imposing restrictions on live music venues that prevents them from hosting artists and performances, simply increases the proportion of venues in Canberra that focus on alcohol consumption. This will only serve to exacerbate the very problem of violence and anti-social behavior that the reforms in liquor licensing laws are hoping to address. The less restrictions placed on live venues, the easier it is for them to provide live music events. This reduces the proportion of venues with a singular focus on alcohol consumption, in turn

reducing the violence associated with it.

Canberra is at a very unique point in its history where it finally has the population, potential venues, dedication of music promotion teams, and passionate music lovers, to allow it to develop a community and culture of live music comparable to the other major cities. The decision that is made when reviewing the laws surrounding the operation of live music venues in Canberra, will undoubtedly be a defining point in our cities history. I hope the decision that is made after this review supports Canberra's growing live music scene, so we may continue to enjoy a rich music culture, and the many benefits it brings with it.

Hopefully yours,

Mr Gabriel Kite-Gilmour