



Parliamentary Inquiry into the Australian Music Industry | West Australian Music

Contact: Mike Harris – CEO, WAM

Brief Introduction

West Australian Music (WAM) is the peak industry body for contemporary music in WA. Having been around since the early 80s WAM is the first such body in Australia. Our purpose is to engage, connect and galvanise the music industry for the benefit and enrichment of all Western Australians.

WAM welcomes this Inquiry and looks forward to the opportunity to expand on the comments below in a WA based hearing. I stress the importance of a WA based hearing as the issues facing artists based in WA, given the remoteness and size of the state do differ from those on the eastern seaboard.

The approach WAM has taken to this submission is to highlight the key issues and some recommendations responding to those.

1. Live music

Playing live remains a key element of many artists careers and central to their ability to provide a sustainable career. Gentrification, in-fill quotas and increasing regulation has put enormous pressure on the live sector. The live music economy contributes to cultural diversity, social inclusion, and employment, and a healthy live music sector provides the conditions to build audiences, develop new artists, and boost sustainable growth in the wider music industry.

Recommendations

- Consider introducing tax incentives for live venues supporting live original music.
- Ongoing support and management of the Live Music Office to best direct its resources on delivering leadership and advice on regulatory reform at a federal, state and local level.
- A national safer venues policy to address sexual harassment essentially making live venues more friendly environments for all people.
- Federal support for the development and implementation of sound attenuation technology and strategies that assist in the management of noise issues.
- Structured support for independent managers, promoters & booking agents to ensure diversity of music on offer and thus supporting a broad cross-section of music is given exposure to new and emerging audiences.

2. Audience development

Often identified as the biggest issue facing the music industry..., where is the next generation of audiences and how do we ensure they are accessing local music? This includes identifying and connecting to the audiences for live music and digital. The ongoing exposure of new audiences to local music is the focus at a state level here in WA as well as nationally through the Australian Music Industry Network. WAM recently invested in an Audience Development Plan for WA music – something we believe to be the first in Australia – and it's recommendations can be grouped as per the below:

Recommendations

- Support for U18s and all ages shows – ensuring this crucial entry point for not just young audiences exists, but also young and emerging artists and entrepreneurs. There are local and state

government regulatory barriers to a flourishing U18s/all ages scene that need reviewing and amending.

- More music in schools – this applies across the curriculum not only embedding music as a stand alone subject. Music provides an effective tool for learning the STEM subjects (promoting STEAM) as well as English and arts subjects.
 - Workshops promoting songwriting and music production.
 - Performances in schools by established bands supported by school based bands.
 - School curriculum based music classes.
 - Applying music principles across other subjects.
 - Use of school facilities as local music hubs, where practicable and appropriate.
- Developing the resources to support digital strategies to ensure more local music gets in front of more people more often. Alongside live performances, digital distribution is a key element of an artist's ability to have a career; yet, very few have the resources and support to navigate the complexities of digital platforms to reach both existing and new audiences.
- Establish partnerships with institutions and other industries to expose more music to local music in their day to day lives, such as:
 - Protocols that require any government funded organisation to use local music ahead of international music. This should include any government infrastructure (including sporting stadia), advertising campaign and/or funded body.
 - Agreements with industries such as the advertising industry to shop local first; additionally organisations/institutions such as shopping centres and the AHA should also be encouraged to enter such protocols.

3. Sustainable careers

Quite simply there is a point in an artist's career where they have achieved a degree of local, national and international success and that success should support a sustainable career, yet when the time comes to pay the mortgage they are in trouble. This is not a glib statement; more than 90% of artists whom name music as their core occupation do not have the safety net of superannuation or health insurance.

Recommendations

- Equal funding to that of sport, including the investment in infrastructure.
- Offering musicians the same career support as their counterparts in other, more traditionally funded, artforms.
- Increased support for export strategies and opportunities.
- Funded superannuation scheme for musicians.
- Ability for artists earning less than a prescribed amount, but not in receipt social security, to take advantage of medical safety net.

4. Rights protection

An obvious issue is that artists must be able to protect their ownership of their work. And when that work is used, receive a fair return for that use. APRA AMCOS are submitting a more fulsome position on this, but suffice it to say this is a crucial issue.

Recommendations

- Look at how we can ensure fairer rates of return per stream.
- Improve and enforce radio quotas for Australian music.
- Tighter Safe Harbour legislation to protect copyright holders.

5. Strong peak bodies and Rights Associations

Music being, for the most, many thousands of micro businesses, differs from most other performing arts which are built around companies and the structures of those develop their respective sectors. For music peak bodies and rights associations offer some of that sector development that would otherwise be entirely decentralised and ineffective. These bodies need ongoing and greater supporter.

Recommendations

- Fund state peak bodies as Majors under the Australia Council, thus offering stability and strategic forward thinking opportunities. Recognising that the peak bodies do not make the art, but go a long way to enhancing the environment within which the art is made.
- A nationally funded body to centralise music lobbying, strategy development and functions such as export and coordination of national issues would be entirely beneficial.

6. Adapting to New Revenue Streams

More broadly – and connected across all of the above - is to ensure the music sector is producing the quality of music that can make it competitive outside the traditional live and playback (streaming, in current times) revenue streams. Creating the music that will offer synching opportunities; that is having local music in demand for national and international advertising campaigns and film and television, as well as gaming, for example.

Recommendations

- More specific training programmes for music content creation for commercial purposes (film and television scoring, commercial music creation).
- Developing music licensing/synchronisation programmes and support.
- Fostering relationships between Australian Film and Television Industries/Australian Advertising Industry and their peak bodies and The Australian Music Industry.
- More sophisticated and incentivised sales/marketing strategies of Australian Musical IP, Globally.
- Tax incentives for Australian songwriters and artists.