



Department of  
**Local Government, Sport  
and Cultural Industries**

## **Western Australian Government submission: Inquiry into the challenges and opportunities within the Australian live music industry**

The Australian live music industry is vital to the vibrancy of the Australian creative industries and cultural landscape of Western Australia and Australia as a whole. The Western Australian Government considers joint partnerships with the Commonwealth Government as crucial to address current issues in the industry.

Through its extended \$3 million Contemporary Music Fund, the WA Government has supported homegrown contemporary music artists with projects that enable them to produce and promote their work, along with building links nationally and internationally. Since its inception in 2019, the Contemporary Music Fund has capitalised on available opportunities for the contemporary music sector; contributed to the development of markets for WA music locally, nationally and internationally; ensured a strong representation of diverse musicians and music professionals and accelerated the recovery of the sector following the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Western Australian Government recommends that the Commonwealth Government introduces the following support measures for the Australian live music industry:

- Assisting live music venues with decreasing their risk rating for public liability insurance
- Establishing a national approach to insurance
- Incentivise under-age live music events.

This submission focuses on the Terms of Reference of audience development and consumer behaviours, including proposed measures for addressing current challenges and building future sustainability within the live music industry.

Changes in consumer behaviour developed during the COVID-19 pandemic are ongoing. The most cited cause is the cost-of-living crisis, however, there are indications that singular, blockbuster events are still selling well. Currently only around 20 per cent of Australian festival line-ups are international acts<sup>1</sup> - a result of exponentially increased costs for festival organisers, which has led to a decline in ticket sales. For Western Australia, these issues are exacerbated by many tours and international artists missing out on Perth due to significantly increased touring costs. Ticket prices for festivals have also increased, alongside the likelihood of cancellation due to poor sales or severe weather events, all together creating a 'perfect storm' for the Western Australian live music industry.

The 18-24 years-old cohort is no longer the biggest audience group for live music festivals<sup>1</sup>, on the back of having been impacted by a lack of gigs during the pandemic. Generation Z, however, has been found by market research to be generally more interested in experiences than products, suggesting there is potential for the live entertainment industry to capitalise further on this.

Live music venues and festival operators need to investigate business models that do not rely on alcohol consumption to make a profit, as young people have been found to drink considerably less

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<sup>1</sup> Creative Australia, Soundcheck: Insights into Australia's music festival sector

than previous generations, making the standard live music venues and festival business model non-profitable.

While numerous causes have contributed to the current challenges of the Australian Live Music Industry, there is now an opportunity for support at all levels of government to support the industry.

The Commonwealth Government, as per the recommendations above, should assist the sustainability of the industry by incentivising under-age gigs and easing regulations for youth engagement. Incentivising under-age gigs for live music event attendances will support both consumers and operators.

There is also an urgent impetus for the Commonwealth Government to assist live music venues with tangible, real time support with decreasing their risk rating for public liability insurance to assist them through the current crisis caused by lack of affordable insurance.

There is an opportunity for the Commonwealth Government to work with the Western Australian Government on developing a nation-wide approach to support audience development for artists, reconnect young people with the joys of live music and support venues and events operators. In doing so, it will support consumers and operators alike, at a time of great need and in concert with a strengthened national approach through Music Australia.

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<sup>i</sup> Creative Australia, Soundcheck: Insights into Australia's music festival sector