



MAJORS CREEK FESTIVAL INCORPORATED

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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Live Performance Federal Insurance Guarantee Fund Bill 2021

Majors Creek Festival Inc would like to make its views on the Live Performance Federal Insurance Guarantee Fund Bill 2021 made known to the Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications.

Majors Creek Festival Inc strongly supports the establishment of a Live Performance Federal Insurance Guarantee Fund and supports and endorses the views and arguments put forward by Senator Hanson-Young in her Second Reading Speech.

Our only reservation is that, given the track record of the Morrison Government on support for the arts sector during the pandemic, responsibility for the formulation of the rules to the establishment, governance and operation of the Fund falls to the Treasurer. We would hope that the Senate Committee in its report will provide some guidance on these matters. One issue is what it is likely to cost small festivals like ours to access the Fund and the amount of red tape and difficulty associated with accessing the Fund. We would urge that, at least for small festivals like ours, the fund operates in a way similar to current adverse weather cancellation insurance, rather than the seemingly more complex way in which the Screen Production Temporary Interruption Fund (TIF) operates.

Majors Creek Festival is an annual music festival that encompasses a range of musical genres: folk, roots, bluegrass, Celtic, jazz, blues, Americana and country. The Festival is a not for profit community- based event and all funds raised through tickets sale etc go back into the festival. It is run by a hard-working and enthusiastic volunteer committee with extensive experience in organising and running festivals. Committee members receive no payment. The committee includes local members who have strong connections to the local community and members who come from Sydney, Canberra, Cobargo, Pambula and elsewhere. 2019 was the sixth year the Festival was held since being revived in 2014. Prior to a two year hiatus in 2012 and 2013 the festival had run for 25 years. The Festival was not held in 2020 and will not be held this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic and may not run again unless there is some protection from significant financial loss if future festivals are cancelled because of covid-19. The Senate Committee would by now understand the financial risks associated with running festivals without insurance that covers cancellation due to a pandemic.

Majors Creek is a small rural gold mining village in the Queanbeyan Palerang Shire, some 16 klms from Braidwood, just over 100 klms from Canberra. The Festival makes a significant contribution to the social and economic welfare of Majors Creek, Braidwood and the local area, benefits which have been lost entirely in 2020 and 2021. To give some idea of the magnitude of the loss we have pulled the following figures from a 2019 post-festival survey. The survey indicated that both Majors Creek and Braidwood benefited from spending, outside of the festival, by festival patrons on accommodation, food, drink, other forms of entertainment, clothing, gifts/souvenirs, petrol and other miscellaneous items. Survey respondents spent an average of \$200 per person outside the festival so total expenditure is estimated to be over \$300,000. Additionally, within the festival there are usually 10-15 well patronised food and other market stalls which operate over the three days of the festival. Most of these are local/regionally based small businesses. Some \$35,000 is paid to performers, 50% of whom are local/regionally based, and around \$76,000 is paid to local/regional suppliers for goods and services for the Festival. These figures are significant in the context of the size and location of Majors Creek.

The Festival draws around 2500 people to Majors Creek and surrounding area. Ticket sales data indicates that in addition to strong regional attendance, many patrons come from much further afield. The Festival is becoming more widely known and has quickly established itself as a well-run family friendly event with a varied program and a good line up of performers. Ticket sales increased by 21% between 2014 and 2019. Analysis of ticket sales indicated that 35% of patrons came from the Canberra/Queanbeyan area, 30% came from the south coast area (Nowra to Eden) and 11% from Sydney suburbs. The remaining 24% came from places scattered throughout NSW and other states.

Around two-thirds of festival patrons had attended the Festival previously, most more than once, while for one third it was their first time. Some 93% of festival patrons said they would come to the festival again, 76% said they were highly likely or probably would visit the area for some other reason, and 83% said they were highly likely or would probably recommend a visit to the area to others.

Hannah Gillespie
President
Majors Creek Festival Inc