

Original live music venues are an essential part of the live music industry. We are the breeding ground for grassroots artists, who may go on to tour both Nationally and Internationally, play stadiums, festivals, and nurture the next generation of grassroots artists on their tours.

Live music venues are an integral part of the Ecosystem. The Pandemic hit this industry the hardest, with the sector brought to its knees and most staff and artists encouraged to 'get a real job', which completely devalued this industry and it is essentially rebuilding from the ground up.

There's no doubt there are signs of optimism and growth in the sector as the economy slowly recovers, but cost of living is still a major roadblock to the sustainability and regrowth of the industry, and I would foresee the government needs to continue investing heavily in the sector for a further 2 – 3 years, to allow time to re-train, re-skill and re-value the industry. Other rising costs are becoming prohibitive such as electricity, insurance and rental premiums.

With a lot of artists starting at the bottom, there is a heavy reliance on business admin skills, such as acquiring an ABN and invoicing, how to get gigs and approach venues, promoters, festivals etc. As the sector rebuilds a lot of this happens organically through a healthy ecosystem, but until it's full return assistance and training is vital. Marketing has become another key skill, and it a very niche industry, so something either artists and venues need to be spending many hours per day on, or hiring skilled individuals to do it for them.

A lot of the skilled personnel left the sector during the Pandemic, so there is a high demand for employment through Sound & lighting engineers, merchandise sellers, booking agents, promoters, marketing, and bar and venue staff. Heavily discounted TAFE courses particularly for Sound and music specific marketing/promotion would benefit the sector immensely. As would training in schools. South Australia once had Ausmusic, which was part of the high school curriculum and students could choose to partake in the course. This led to learning and playing in bands, getting live gig experience at a younger age and the networking that follows this. Also, the potential for lunchtime concerts or coordinated shows in venues, broadening access to audience development.

More funding is required for grassroots musicians. Nearly all must take on full time employment, which impedes on growth and development for artists, and both artists and other skilled workers and venue operators in the sector are made to feel like 'hobbyists'. With the amount of revenue live music generates this is a legitimate career pathway for artists and other music industry workers, and should be valued and invested in.

Live music venues give so much to the community. They are a safe space to discover new music, new people, and new interests.