

April 2024



Clubs Australia

CLUBS AUSTRALIA SUBMISSION

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT LIVE MUSIC INQUIRY

A. INTRODUCTION

Clubs Australia welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Standing Committee on Communications and Arts inquiry into the challenges and opportunities within the Australian live music industry.

Clubs Australia represents 6,000 licensed clubs that employ more than 140,000 people. Clubs are not-for-profit, member-owned organisations whose central activity is to provide sporting and recreation infrastructure to their members and the wider community.

The club industry has played a significant role in supporting emerging and established live music artists by providing them with a platform to showcase their talent. Clubs offer spaces to artists and performers at a discounted rate or free of charge to exhibit their cultural and creative abilities. This has been instrumental in facilitating gatherings, promoting artistic talent, expanding local audiences, and supporting the development of aspiring performers.

Clubs in NSW host 15,000 monthly complimentary events for members and guests, generating \$167 million annually.¹ These experiences allow individuals to connect through art and culture, enhancing positive mental health and well-being.

Clubs are interested in expanding live entertainment offerings in their venues. However, they often face challenges in organising and providing options for their members and guests. Clubs are particularly constrained by noise-related licence conditions, extended trading restrictions, the lack of centralised coordination, and administrative requirements.

Clubs Australia supports the Federal Government's commitment to create a vibrant and sustainable live music industry. There are further opportunities to assist clubs in their efforts to bolster the arts, cultural, and creative sectors.

Clubs Australia's submission focuses on the Terms of Reference (ToR) related to:

- The suitability and location of venues
- Capacity building in facilitating and promoting events
- Audience development
- Grant and support programs

¹ Urbis. 2023. 'Economic and Social Impact of Clubs in NSW'. pp. 1-69



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B. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Clubs Australia recommends:

1. Continue providing additional support to clubs hosting live music through the Live Music Grant Program.
2. The Australian Government plays a more significant role in fostering and strengthening relationships between artists and clubs.
3. The Australian Government works with state and territory governments to streamline the process for clubs to host outdoor live music.
4. Simplify the process for clubs to host indoor entertainment through the Building Code class.

C. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR CLUBS HOSTING EVENTS

The Australian Government's Live Music Grant Program has assisted venues in establishing or expanding their live music offerings for members, guests, and visitors. Clubs are well-positioned to support emerging and established artists.

In 2023, Petersham Bowling Club in NSW secured over \$24,000 to upgrade their PA and lighting system in their designated band area. Meanwhile, the Whyalla Left Hand Club in South Australia was granted \$5,000 for their Local Legends Program.

Clubs Australia advocates for additional rounds of the Live Music Grant Program or similar opportunities. This would support clubs in upgrading facilities, purchasing essential equipment, and expanding local audiences.

Clubs are particularly interested in opportunities to support capital works projects and acquire specific equipment that benefits musicians. Numerous clubs are interested in constructing or upgrading auditoriums and stages that better cater to the needs of the creative industry.

Clubs Australia recommends:

- 1. Continue providing additional support to clubs hosting live music through the Live Music Grant Program.**

D. INCREASED PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE CREATIVE SECTOR AND CLUB INDUSTRY

Clubs, particularly those in regional or remote locations, experience difficulties accessing and connecting with musicians and performers due to challenges in identifying artists.

Many venues provide cultural infrastructure, such as theatres, exhibition spaces, auditoriums, and showrooms, that would enable the creative sector to flourish in metropolitan and regional areas across the country. Clubs can utilise their membership bases and strong marketing capabilities to draw large audiences for cultural experiences and activities.



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There is an opportunity to foster increased partnerships between live music artists and registered clubs.

Clubs Australia considers the Australian Government can play a more significant role in developing and strengthening relationships between artists and venues, including clubs.

Clubs Australia recommends:

- 2. The Australian Government plays a more significant role in fostering and strengthening relationships between artists and clubs.**

E. STREAMLINE THE PROCESS FOR CLUBS TO HOST OUTDOOR LIVE MUSIC

Clubs encounter difficulties in obtaining approval to host outdoor live music at their premises, whether on bowling greens, golf courses, or patios.

Each state and territory has different rules concerning live entertainment at registered clubs, from permits, licences, and development consent.

In NSW, registered clubs are required to secure development consent from the local council to host outdoor live music. However, obtaining approval has proven to be quite challenging. Many local councils reject development applications or impose stringent conditions on clubs' ability to host live music outdoors.

These measures prevent clubs from supporting artists and offering arts and cultural experiences for their members and guests. Live entertainment plays a pivotal role in promoting mental health, fostering connectivity, and enhancing social inclusion.

Clubs Australia recommends that the Australia Government works with state and territory governments to streamline the process for clubs to host outdoor live music. We are supportive of initiatives that make it easier for clubs to expand and diversify their offerings.

This aligns with the objective of the National Cultural Policy (Revive), which aims to reactivate the creative sector by offering more spaces for artists to showcase their talent.

Clubs Australia recommends:

- 3. The Australian Government works with state and territory governments to streamline the process for clubs to host outdoor live music.**

F. SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS FOR CLUBS TO HOST INDOOR ENTERTAINMENT

Under the National Construction Code, registered clubs may be classified as class 6 buildings.

However, if a club offers live entertainment or includes a dance floor, it is categorised as class 9b. Such venues are subject to additional requirements, such as the installation of a sprinkler system and appropriate air ventilation. These conditions result in excessive expenses, constraining clubs' ability to host live entertainment for their local communities.



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Clubs Australia proposes that the Australian Government work with state and territory governments to simplify the process for clubs to host live entertainment. We recommend revising the building classification or providing increased flexibility for venues, especially smaller ones, that are interested in hosting small-scale live entertainment.

This change would assist numerous clubs in offering live entertainment without facing significant financial difficulties.

Clubs Australia recommends:

- 4. Simplify the process for clubs to host live entertainment through the Building Code class.**

CONTACT INFORMATION

Clubs Australia appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission. For further information, please contact Alison Tehan, Executive Manager of Regulatory Affairs, at

