

27.02.2018

**Inquiry:**

**The music and arts  
economy in New  
South Wales**

**NSW Government**

**Submitted via email:**

**portfoliocommittee6@  
parliament.nsw.gov.au**

Dear Mr Green and fellow committee members,

at a recent industry roundtable, I was horrified to hear the artistic director of one of the state's leading multi-arts festivals describe a recent venue license negotiation process in which she was asked to include a provision that there would be no dancing.

This is not the gesture of a world-class city with confidence in its creatives to set the tone that's recognised internationally as distinctively Sydney. And yet NSW is a state that prizes its music and its arts, acknowledging that our global reputation is earned primarily by our creative innovators.

A state's arts policy should celebrate its confidence in its artists – both well-known and yet to emerge – trusting in them to create the cultural experiences of today and the cultural identities of tomorrow.

The National Association for the Visual Arts welcomes the opportunity to contribute to policy that will enhance NSW's arts and culture by recognising the key elements contributing to the economy as well as the community. NAVA has a three-decade history of advising on cultural policy and achieving impactful change for our thousands of individual and organisational Members across Australia, as well as for the arts more broadly. We have endorsed the joint submission made by the state's leading industry bodies in recommending ministerial oversight on all aspects of the night-time economy, as well as planning controls and incentives that encourage appropriate activity to balance community and commercial interests.

Complementing that joint submission, we offer further contributions here:

**(a) Progress on the implementation of the Government response to the New South Wales Night-Time Economy Roundtable Action Plan**

It is after hours, after work, after dark, that we look to our streets, venues and open spaces for the experiences that enrich our lives – experiences that attract people into a town or a city from across

suburbs, regions, and indeed, across the world. In nobody's estimation is NSW one to turn its back on this exciting and defining challenge. And yet all of this is at risk.

For a city that prides itself on its national and global reputation as a place of innovation and sophistication, Sydney's alarming drop in liveability and cultural attraction is cause for great concern. Responsible, confident policy must be enacted as a matter of urgency to prevent further cultural decline and economic devastation.

A more sophisticated approach to redressing crime would not penalise entire precincts and destroy local culture, but rather, target the causes of anti-social or violent behaviour by working closely with colleagues in mental health and social services.

### **(b) Policies that could support a diverse and vibrant music and arts culture across New South Wales**

- Offer audiences alternatives to durational, ticketed and other performance-based cultural product by supporting both independent and state-owned galleries to open for longer hours
- Invest in funding programs that reward artists with audacity and expertise to create and present new work
- Invest in service organisations whose work focuses on fostering a thriving industry from their specialist perspective, ensuring a consistently expert approach to artist, audience and industry development
- Adopt the NAVA Code of Practice for the Professional Australian Visual Arts, Craft and Design Sector as best practice, including the fees schedule, to ensure fair dealing and fair pay for artists
- Make all NSW Government arts funding contingent upon the payment of artists' fees, with minimums set out in the Code of Practice.

### **(c) Policies that could support the establishment and sustainability of permanent and temporary venue spaces for music and for the arts**

- Open up unused commercial spaces flexibly and responsively by implementing the Renew Australia model as policy across all local government
- Ensure that the burden of compliance for making spaces available for creative use does not fall disproportionately on the artist

- Encourage mixed-use zoning that fosters a diversity of cultural programming at appropriate scale in neighbourhoods that communities value
- Recognise that the responsible service and enjoyment of alcohol is part of the Australian culture, and that limited liquor licenses should remain available to non-profit organisations via a rapid and non-onerous application process. Emulate the Victorian culture here.

**(d) Policy and legislation in other jurisdictions, and options for New South Wales including red tape reduction and funding options**

- Ensure that the burden of compliance for making spaces available for creative use does not fall disproportionately on the artist
- Emulate South Australia's approach to fostering live music venues
- Emulate Victoria's approach to liquor licensing for small venues and 'agent of change' legislation.

**(e) Any other related matter**

- The point at which regulation compliance is enforced is the key to fostering the confident culture that drives innovation in the economy. Policy doesn't begin and end with a document adopted at ministerial level; to avoid the situation faced by our stunned artistic director, that policy needs to be enacted as cultural change, infusing all of its agents including public servants and police. Musicians, artists, venue managers and members of the general public who interact with the agents of regulation compliance must leave the exchange feeling empowered to create inspiring new experiences for the people of NSW.

NAVA looks forward to celebrating with the NSW Government on the implementation of a new approach to music and the arts that powers the state's economy and inspires the state's communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information I can provide.

Sincerely,



Esther Anatolitis  
Executive Director