



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Culture and the Arts**

# Live Music Venues Review



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## **About DCA**

The Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA) guides the delivery of culture and arts for Western Australia through the provision of policy development, coordination and support services to the Culture and Arts portfolio. DCA also supports the culture and the arts sector.

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# 1. Executive summary

Over recent years, much has been reported across Australia on the viability of live music venues. In Perth, two established live music venues - The Bakery and Deville's Pad - announced in early 2015 they would close their doors.

The closures led representatives of the live music industry to organise a 'Perth Venue Action meet' held on 23 February 2015 at The Bakery. An action group, 'More Music Arts Venues Perth' was established, as well as a [website](#) and a [Facebook](#) page with over 3,000 followers.

This paper represents a desktop review of the live music venues in Western Australia (WA), examining whether the recent closures represent a trend and if so, what policy or other considerations may be taken into account to support venues that showcase live music.

The review defines live music venues as venues presenting original live music performances on a regular basis, including pop, jazz, blues, country, rock, folk, soul, R&B, techno, hip hop, heavy metal and/or electronic dance music. Live music venues can include bars, hotels, nightclubs, music clubs, wineries, cafes, theatres, community centres, halls, pop-up venues and other spaces that host regular original music performances. DCA acknowledges that non-original music (such as cover bands) is also performed live in venues, and while this category is not the focus of this review, these venues have been included in the data analysis as they have the capacity and opportunity to support the performance of original live music.

Based on the data reviewed, there is no evidence of an overall decline in the number of live music venues in WA. The venues which have closed appear to represent natural fluctuations in the market. However, since 2008 there has been a decline in live music venues in the outer metropolitan suburbs of Perth, where there have been 23 closures with only two new venues opening. The reasons for this require further investigation.

The closure of The Bakery may have created a gap in medium scale venues (400-600 pax capacity) in the entertainment precinct of Northbridge. The lease of Rechabites Hall has not yet been announced but may provide an opportunity for local live music previously performed at The Bakery to be re-accommodated.

Ongoing regulatory reform provided by state and local governments to support the music industry is important in providing increased opportunities for musicians to play. While there may be some issues around planning and approval processes, there is no suggestion that these are more prevalent in Western Australia than in other States.



WA's contemporary music industry has benefitted from substantial State Government investment and support since the establishment of the Contemporary Music Taskforce in 2001, which identified issues and opportunities for the sector. Available data suggest there has been strong growth in revenue and audiences in the contemporary music industry since this time.

There are some potential barriers to continual growth in live music due to the impact of residential infill, rising venue establishment costs and potential increased rents in successful precinct areas. This paper presents recommendations for further consideration of these matters.



## 2. Contemporary music industry snapshot

Artists, booking agents, festivals, venues and their audiences form the foundation of the WA contemporary music industry. Live music venues are critical for grassroots community support of local and touring artists creating and performing original music.

Live music venues can be divided into small (capacity of up to 200 people) and medium-sized (capacity of 400-600), and can include bars, hotels, nightclubs, music clubs, wineries, cafes, theatres, community centres, halls, pop-up venues and other spaces that host regular original music performances. Perth's stadiums, outdoor festival sites and other specialist venues catering to non-contemporary music (such as the Perth Concert Hall) also make a contribution to WA's live music industry.

In general, small to medium venues support local musicians whereas the larger venues support touring acts. Local musicians often support touring acts, which provides an opportunity for them to play to larger audiences, gain industry experience and expand their creative practice.

In 2008, the Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA) compiled a database of venues where music was performed live based on data from VROOM venue database and gig guides such as [streetsofperth.com.au](http://streetsofperth.com.au), [perthsounds.com](http://perthsounds.com) and [wagigguide.com.au](http://wagigguide.com.au). This database included live music venues that support both original and non-original music, as these venues also have the capacity and opportunity to support performances of original live music. DCA has used this database as a baseline to compile a list of current live music venues (Attachment 1).

A comparison of the two databases shows a decrease in the overall number of venues from 138 in 2008 to 111 in 2015. There was a decline in live music venues in the outer metropolitan suburbs of Perth, where there are approximately 21 fewer venues than there were in 2008. The reasons for the decline will require further investigation.

The data showed that there was no change in the number of venues which regularly support original music, with approximately 37 venues supporting original music in both 2008 and 2015.



### 3. DCA support for the contemporary music industry

In 2001, the then State Government established a Ministerial Contemporary Music Taskforce that helped develop the State Government's Contemporary Music Strategy. Following the Taskforce recommendations in 2002, the State Government committed \$5 million over four years to support WA's contemporary music industry.

Since the introduction of the State Government's Contemporary Music Strategy in 2002, DCA has provided more than \$13.3 million to support the WA contemporary music industry (Attachment 2).

DCA's investment in WA's contemporary music industry has encouraged the growth and success of WA bands and artists on a local, national and international basis.

#### **West Australian Music (WAM)**

Following the implementation of the Contemporary Music Strategy, DCA committed to providing multi-year and later triennial funding to the industry's peak body, West Australian Music (WAM).

Since 2002, DCA has provided more than \$4.14 million of core funding to WAM (see Attachment 2, Table 2). In addition to the core funding, WAM has also received an additional \$1.28 million in strategic initiative funding, including \$603,583 of devolved funding between 2004-2011 for the RAMMPAAGE Program for regional performances (see Attachment 2, Table 3).

#### **Project funding**

Through its Creative Industries Grants Program, DCA provides funding to raise the profile of WA contemporary music locally, nationally and internationally. Contemporary musicians can apply for funding to assist with touring, recording and accessing commercial markets.

More than \$7.79million of project funding has been distributed through DCA's previous Contemporary Music Program (2002-2013) and the Creative Industries Grants Programs (2014) (see Attachment 2, Table 1 for a breakdown of annual funding amounts).

#### **Sound Attenuation Support Program (SASP)**

In 2005, DCA initiated the Sound Attenuation Support Program (SASP), with \$250,000 in one-off funding to support live music venues.

The aim of SASP was to provide dollar-for-dollar funding (up to \$50,000) to venue operators to undertake sound attenuation and management activities.



Venues were required to demonstrate a significant track record and future commitment to supporting live original contemporary music to be considered eligible for funding. A total of \$82,987 was awarded to six live music venues (see Attachment 2, Table 4 for the list of funded venues).

Between 2006-2009, DCA partnered with other State Government agencies and local government authorities on initiatives to support live music venues as part of the SASP.

Working with the East Perth Redevelopment Authority (now the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority), the Cities of Perth and Vincent and the Departments of Environment and Conservation and Racing, Gaming and Liquor, DCA was involved in:

- The development of information packs titled 'Keeping it in the Mix' for residents, venue operators and developers;
- The development of a Special Noise Zone for the Northbridge Precinct;
- A review of the Environmental Protection Noise Regulations Complaints process;
- The modification of the Objectives of the Liquor Licensing Act to include the support for contemporary music; and
- The development of an outdoor events approvals process.

## Other DCA support

In the past, DCA has provided capital support through its Community Cultural and Arts Facilities Fund (CCAFF) and the Arts Capital Fund (ACF) for not-for-profit and community organisations to improve their spaces to encourage more performance (see Attachment 2, Table 6).

DCA also provides core funding to Artrage, which provides opportunities for local, national and international musicians to perform as part of its Fringe World Festival.



## 4. Current issues

### **Venue closures and perceived gap in live music venues**

In reviewing the reasons for the recent closure of several live music venues in the Perth metropolitan area, there is no common reason for the closures.

#### **Kulcha**

Kulcha, a performance space in Fremantle run by Multicultural Arts of WA Inc, closed in early 2014 after the organisation was wound up due to financial difficulties. Kulcha was dedicated to supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) musicians and there was concern that its closure would create a gap in potential performance spaces specifically for CaLD artists.

When Kulcha first opened its doors in the 1980s, world music was not well represented in metropolitan venues. World music is now regularly represented in venues in Fremantle and Perth and is no longer considered a niche genre, reducing the need for an organisation like Kulcha to provide performance opportunities for world music acts.

A group of artists has continued under the 'Keep Kulcha Alive' banner and in 2014 used venues including MosArts, Mosman Park, Kidogo Arts House, Fremantle and The Fremantle Fibonacci Centre.

The Office of Multicultural Interests is aware of a number of CaLD performers accessing small community venues including the group Iranian Cultural House (Persian Music and Culture) using the Macedonian Community Hall in North Perth and Applecross Town Hall.

#### **Deville's Pad**

After opening in 2008, Deville's Pad closed in March 2015. The nightclub had provided live music opportunities for musicians and DJ's three nights a week, with a venue capacity of approximately 300. No public reason was given for the closure of Deville's Pad.

#### **YaYa's**

Northbridge small venue, YaYa's, closed in October 2014 after five years in operation. It has since reopened with a new business model, which no longer includes a live music program. YaYa's management has not publicly commented on the change.



## The Bakery

The Bakery's contemporary music program was run by Artrage, providing a licensed venue with capacity for 400 people in its music performance space. In 2009, Artrage received \$300,000 funding through DCA's Arts Capital Fund for the redevelopment of The Bakery, including the refit of the venue (which was not purpose-built), gallery and the development of an outdoor area, including an office space.

The closure of The Bakery followed the sale of the property in 2014 to a developer, together with a focus by Artrage on its Fringe World Festival activity. The land the Northbridge venue occupied is set to undergo major residential development in late 2015.

The Bakery's closure, prompted by the sale of the land and property, could be representative of future demands where there is increasing need to provide high density residential infill. Such infill is likely to occur in precincts where live music venues have historically been located.

The perception in the music industry is that the closure of The Bakery has caused a gap in medium capacity live music venues, particularly in Northbridge. Action Group 'More Music Arts Venues Perth' is campaigning for the historic buildings, Rechabites Hall on William Street in Northbridge or the Gasworks Building on Wellington Street in Perth, to be re-activated as a new live music venue to offset the closure of The Bakery.

According to WAM, the closure of The Bakery has placed greater demand on venues such as The Bird and the Rosemount Hotel, which has both positive and negative consequences. At the public 'Perth Venue Action meet' held in February 2015 at The Bakery, the predominant call from industry was that the gap in smaller capacity venues was more pressing, as they provide opportunities for local musicians to connect with local audiences.

New venues such as Jimmy's Den may partly fill this 200 capacity gap in Northbridge, as might the redevelopment of Rechabites Hall depending on the outcome of the tender process begun by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority.

The Gasworks Building is unlikely to provide a solution. The building is a large former industrial warehouse owned by the City of Perth. There have been a number of proposals to repurpose the building, however there have not been any credible proposals for a live music venue. Significant capital investment would be necessary to address the required modifications to the heritage building and compliance issues for public use. While local government and private owners have the opportunity to access heritage building grants, the scale and level of investment required to convert the building as a venue for live music or other significant cultural activity would be substantial.

It is too early to fully understand the impact of The Bakery's closure more broadly and whether there is a genuine reduction of opportunities or simply a displacement to other precincts.



Following the August 2014 announcement that the Fly by Night Musicians Club had lost their lease but Sunset Events was successful with its tender for the Artillery Drill Hall building, City of Fremantle Mayor, Brad Pettitt, commented:

*'In my more optimistic moments I can imagine that an upside consequence of this hard period is that central Fremantle will have more live music than ever before with the newly located Fly by Night Musicians Club and Sunset Event's two venues, in addition to great existing venues like Clancy's, Xwray and Odd Fellow.'*

*Fremantle could once again become the centre of original live music in Perth in a way we haven't seen since the early 1990s when most of the West End pubs were live music venues.'*

It is difficult to tell from these examples whether the closures are a trend resulting from issues such as the impact of residential infill and cost pressures on venues, or other factors.

However, there are approximately 21 fewer live music venues in the outer metropolitan area now as compared with 2008. The reasons for this will require further investigation; however these are likely to include:

- infrastructure and compliance costs relating to access, parking and toilets;
- capital investment in a PA system and sound attenuation; and
- cost and administrative workload in Liquor Licensing extensions and insurance.

## New and repurposed venues

### Jimmy's Den

Jimmy's Den is a new first floor venue that opened on James Street, Northbridge in 2015. The venue has a capacity of 200 (standing) or 100 (seated) and is available for both 18+ and all-ages events held during the day or in the evening. A local pop-up bar company Bar Pop invested a total of \$300,000 into the venue, including \$50,000 for a lift for disabled access. It has been reported that the venue will need at least two shows a week at capacity to break even.

### Fly by Night Musicians Club

In 2014, after 28 years, the Fly by Night Musicians Club lost its peppercorn lease on the Artillery Drill Hall in Fremantle. The City of Fremantle discussed alternative venue options and the organisation moved into the Victoria Hall in Fremantle.



To finance the move, the Fly by Night Musicians Club initiated a successful crowd funding campaign to assist with the costs of moving from the Artillery Drill Hall to Victoria Hall, including transferring the liquor license, installing sound treatment and moving and setting up staging and equipment.

## Artillery Drill Hall

Sunset Events, a local contemporary music events company, was the successful applicant for the Artillery Drill Hall lease advertised by the National Trust and will maintain the use of the space as a live music venue. Sunset Events has a strong presence in the WA contemporary music industry and is well positioned to create a new vibrant, engaging space in Fremantle.

Further new venues have recently been announced:

- A new room called 'The Boston', at Rosie O'Gradys on the corner of James and Milligan Streets in Northbridge, with a 200 seat capacity;
- 'The Sewing Room', a basement venue in one of Perth's most beautiful old buildings at 317 Murray Street, which was once the main manufacturing space and sewing room for the Pierucci fashion empire. According to its Facebook page, the venue will 'provide a space, infrastructure and support for emerging local artists from all artistic spheres'.
- The Basso or The Bassendean Music Bar, recently opened in a refurbished heritage listed hotel in Bassendean. The new owners are keen to get behind promoting live music and art in Perth.
- Jack Rabbit Slim's will be opening its doors in late July 2015 on Aberdeen Street, Northbridge. The venue will offer a combination of a small bar coupled with a fully functioning multi-purpose gig venue. The new music venue will showcase local talent and service touring artists, with a cross-section of both bands and electronic acts.

## Market demand

### Ticket revenue and attendance

The Live Performance Australia (LPA) Ticket Attendance and Revenue Survey is the principal source of reliable industry statistics for the Australian live performance industry, and represents the most comprehensive available survey of revenue and ticket sales for live performance events in Australia. However, revenue and tickets sales at small-medium venues are not captured in this survey, and further research needs to be undertaken to accurately quantify WA attendance figures in such venues.

A summary of the 2013 national results, the latest available, state:

'In 2013, nationally the Contemporary Music category experienced growth in both revenue and total attendance from 2012. Although total attendance increased by 14.3 per cent, gross revenue increased by 30.3 per cent from \$482.18 million to \$628.13 million. The larger gain in gross revenue can be explained by the 10.2 per cent increase in the average ticket price from \$100.27 to \$110.50.'



In WA, revenue increased by 44.9 per cent and attendances by 20.2 per cent, outstripping the average rate of growth across the country.

*Categories included in the LPA definition for Contemporary Music:*

*'All forms of the following, performed by any type of ensemble or soloist (including any ensemble/chorus/solo musicians advertising a program which is exclusively one of the following categories, e.g. 'pop' or 'jazz,' as in The Australian Jazz Orchestra): Pop, Jazz, Blues, Country, Rock, Folk, Soul, R&B, Techno, Hip hop, Rap, Heavy Metal, and Electronic Dance Music.'*

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2013-14 data also shows an increase in attendance rates in WA. In 2013-14, WA attendance rates were higher than the national average for all performing arts categories including classical music, popular music, theatre, dance musicals and operas and other performing arts.

There were 694,000 attendances at popular music events in WA in 2013-14, making it the most popular arts activity following cinema.

Attendance rates at popular music events in WA was 34.5 per cent of the population, which is greater than the national average of 32.6 per cent. This is a slight reduction (1.8 per cent) on 2009-10 rate of 36.3 per cent, although not significant.

## Audience development

According to WAM, audience development for original music remains an ongoing issue in Western Australia. WAM has the following comment linked to their core funding on their website:

*'WAM unfortunately isn't funded by the government to specifically undertake any audience development programs. As such, any such audience development-focused program needs to be funded through other sources. Previously Healthway supported this role in the youth arena, and we hope to reinstate it with support from the right sponsor. WAM is conducting a model of the schools programs with the support of WA based property group Hawaiian, as well as developing original music audiences in regional areas via programs like the Regional Touring Circuit and Sounds of series.'*

Funding is currently available for audience development through DCA's Creative Industries Grants Program in the Sector Development and Commercial Development categories (and previously through the Contemporary Music Program). DCA has funded numerous Audience Development projects since the commencement of the Contemporary Music Program in 2002 (see Attachment 2, Table 6 for a list of 2002-2014 funded projects).



## 5. Regulatory framework

The ability of a venue to host live music performances is impacted by a large number of interconnected State and Local Government regulations, legislation and planning guidelines. These include liquor licensing (Department of Liquor, Gaming and Racing), environmental protection (Environmental Protection Authority), local planning regulations and other areas of the regulatory framework such as the Australian Building Code of Australia. WA has a relatively progressive framework which broadly encourages live music in venues.

Many local planning schemes support live music venues in specific locations. The City of Perth Local Planning Scheme No. 26 (Amendment No.1) and City Planning Scheme No.2 (Amendment No 28) have provided updated, clear definitions for cultural and creative industry activities and entertainment activities within the City and outlined the precincts where such activities are preferred, contemplated or prohibited. People seeking business opportunities within the City have the ability to use the Scheme to target appropriate premises and locations.

Local authorities also have the option to nominate or consider particular outcomes for Developer Contribution Schemes, which could provide incentives for small to medium sized performance venues within preferred locations.

[State Planning Policies](#) guide community and social infrastructure strategies at a State level, and apply to multi-use community and non-commercial venues. [Liveable Neighbourhoods](#) provides comment on factors contributing to density and activity centres, but does not explicitly support performance or music related initiatives.

### Liquor licensing

In 2005, the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor undertook a review of the Liquor Control Act 1988. As part of the review, the State Government recognised live music as a vital part of developing a vibrant nightlife in our cities and towns and that live music performance played a major role in developing the State's reputation as a world-class tourist destination. To contribute to the development of the live music industry in Western Australia, the Liquor Licensing Act was amended to include the live music industry as one of the industries supported by the objects of the Act.

#### *WA LIQUOR CONTROL ACT 1988 - SECT 5*

##### *5 . Objects of the Act*

*(2) In carrying out its functions under this Act, the licensing authority shall have regard to the primary objects of this Act and also to the following secondary objects*

*(a) to facilitate the use and development of licensed facilities, including their use and development for the performance of live original music, reflecting the diversity of the requirements of consumers in the State*



Currently only Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia have specific reference to live music and entertainment in the objects of their Acts. Its inclusion means live music is a relevant consideration in licensing matters such as applications, amenity or complaints processes, variations on trading hours and conditions or transfer of licenses.

This again is a complex issue. The Office of Multicultural Interests considers relaxation of liquor licensing requirements may in fact limit the number and diversity of venues suitable for CaLD performances. Specifically, it may be culturally inappropriate for both performers and audiences to attend venues where alcohol is served. This also extends to venues suitable for family-friendly or youth performances.

The review also resulted in the introduction of a 'small bar licence' in 2007.

Broadly, these aspects of the regulatory framework are positive for the industry in WA. However, feedback from the industry suggests that because these licenses only apply to a limited number of venues, the introduction of small bar licences may not have significantly added to the amount of live music opportunities available, often due to the cost for the small bar to offer live music.

## **Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997**

The State Government's Directions 2031 seeks a 50 per cent improvement on current infill residential development trends of 30 and 35 per cent. Many of these new dwellings will be in the form of high density residential developments, built within a twenty kilometre radius of the City in entertainment districts and on major roads such as Beaufort Street, William Street, Oxford Street, Scarborough Beach Road and Fitzgerald Street where many of Perth's live music venues are currently located.

This increasing densification of Perth raises issues of competing land uses.

There is a risk that venue operators will have to build in costs and obligations of sound attenuation to comply with the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 and local planning policies. Key local authorities City of Vincent, City of Fremantle, City of Perth as well as the MRA all have similar sound attenuation policies to manage the impacts of music noise upon residents and businesses.

These policies support the live music industry by requiring developers of new residential development in mixed use zones/town centres/entertainment districts to take specific noise attenuation measures to moderate the impact of residual breakout noise from venues on new residents.

Furthermore local authorities are addressing potential issues by balancing the onus of regulation with consumer awareness to mitigate against future issues. For example, a six-storey mixed use development recently received building approval on the corner of Fitzgerald and Angove Streets, North Perth across the road from the Rosemount Hotel, which stages numerous original WA live music in its premises as well as in its court yard. The development will include forty-one apartments.



The following was a condition of approval put upon the developer as specified by the City of Vincent Health Services:

*'The development is proposed in an entertainment/mixed use precinct with several premises providing amplified music. Subsequently, you are directed to place a Notification on the Certificate of Title. The Notification shall advise that the property may be subject to activities such as traffic, car parking, and elevated baseline sound levels that constitute activities not normally associated with a typical residential development. In addition, these details shall also be placed on the Sales Contract so that prospective purchasers acknowledge that the relevant property is located in an entertainment/commercial precinct with elevated sound levels.'*

The City of Perth is progressing the preparation of a policy for Northbridge which is intended to remain as the City's (and State's) primary entertainment precinct, to address construction standards for new noise sensitive developments within this area while also establishing 'acceptable' noise levels for existing venues.

The City of Fremantle has a local planning policy – [Local Planning Policy No. 2.18](#) 'New Residential Developments in the City Centre Zone – Noise from an existing source' – which includes provision for the City to impose a condition on planning approvals for new residential development requiring a notification to be placed on the certificate of title. The wording of the notification is similar to that of the City of Vincent quoted above.

The Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority has also introduced some regulatory improvements with new developments being required to meet the sound attenuation design requirements to limit the impact of existing noise for new inner city dwellings.

Victoria has introduced the 'Agent of Change' principle in its legislation, which will put the responsibility of noise mitigation and expectations for maintaining amenity on new developments. Residential developers building next to existing live music venues will have to finance sound-proofing as part of the development.

## Building Code of Australia

The Building Code of Australia (BCA) has a direct impact on live music venue viability, as well as on existing venues providing a live music program. Under current BCA definitions, venues are either classified as Retail Class 6, which groups retail, bars, hotels and restaurants, or Assembly Building Class 9B. If a venue offers live entertainment it is then classed as a 9B (together with buildings such as sports stadiums and airports) and is required to comply with higher safety standards.

This is particularly troublesome for smaller venues and those located in older buildings, which are generally more expensive to modernise and bring up to code standard. The extensive building work required for this higher level of compliance can make it unviable for small venues to host independent small-scale entertainment.



The following table outlines some of the key reforms undertaken in Victoria and New South Wales:

<p><b>Victoria</b></p>	<p>In Victoria the Building Amendment (Live Music) Regulations 2014 were introduced to amend the Building Regulations 2006 in relation to the classification of small live music venues under the BCA in the State of Victoria. The Regulations were changed to recognise the provision of live music entertainment as an important part of the use of small Class 6 buildings such as hotels, restaurants, cafes and bars (small live music venues).</p> <p>The amendment exempts primary purpose live music venues that are at or under 500msq and with a vertical travel of two floors or less from being assessed as a class 9b assembly building for compliance.</p>
<p><b>New South Wales</b></p>	<p>NSW undertook BCA reform as part of a simplification of its application process in 2009 following the establishment of a new Planning Framework for Live Entertainment. The new system.</p> <p>Removed the term “place of public entertainment” from several NSW Policies including the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 (the EP&amp;A Regulation).</p> <p>Introduced a new term “entertainment venue”, which applies to a building being used as a cinema, theatre, concert hall or an indoor sports stadium. This definition replaced the previous definition of “places of public entertainment” and provides the link between the EP&amp;A Regulation and the BCA so that the provisions within the NSW Variations in the BCA now only apply to entertainment venues (typically with fixed seating) instead of that broader range of uses that were regulated as places of public entertainment such as bars, pubs, restaurants or registered clubs. This reduces the impact of the BCA classifications on these smaller venues.</p> <p>Confirmed that ‘live entertainment’ is part of normal activities at bars, restaurants, clubs and pubs and a separate approval was no longer needed which has streamlined the approval process for venues providing live music/performance.</p>



## 6. What the sector is seeking

Issues facing the national live music industry are more widely understood now than they have ever been. Recent changes to regulatory frameworks in Victoria and NSW, as well as community campaigns like 'SLAM' and 'Raise The Bar', have brought the concerns of the live music industry to state and local governments, and the broader public. Many of the reforms introduced have already been considered by WA over the past decade.

Action Group 'More Music Arts Venues Perth' organised the 'Perth Venue Action meet' at The Bakery in February 2015 to discuss the current live music venue situation and to examine options for Government support in this area. Approximately 300 people from the music industry attended.

The attendees could not arrive at a clear consensus on the type of government support the industry believes it needs mainly due to competing needs between booking agents and venue owners. For example, there was both support and opposition to a government owned and subsidised venue because of the potential impact this could have on existing commercial venues.

### **Summary of 'More Music Arts Venues Perth' meeting**

- The live music industry currently faces challenges; however the number of venues available was not at crisis point. There was no clear consensus on the need for a State Government subsidised venue;
- A more focussed approach to audience development was needed;
- The establishment of a venue production fund (e.g. in-house technical equipment) should be investigated; and
- Consultation with local government planning/approval processes and officers was needed.

On its website, the group has called for:

- A relaxation of stringent licensing laws;
- A hand from government to open more spaces, and subsidise a venue;
- Liquor licensing laws and policy reform to ensure the continuing viability of the State's Live Music industry;
- Some real business muscle to develop great spaces for our artists; and
- Fringe and PIAF are great but we need help building a creative Perth that is bustling and vibrant 12 months of the year.



## West Australian Music (WAM) peak body

WAM is in the process of undertaking consultancy with its Music Council to devise a framework for the sector to look at a suite of WA music industry issues affecting the industry including live music venues. This will include the issue of regulatory reform and devising the best path forward to incorporate planning, liquor licensing and local government into a series of recommendations to better support the live music sector.

The Music Council was formed by WAM in 2013 to collect feedback from the industry on how it can best be spent so it can advocate and advise in ways that maximise opportunities and growth in the music industry. It is comprised of leaders of the WA music industry, chosen for their skills and experience as artists, or their senior roles in music businesses and organisations.

WAM's position on the need for a specific government subsidised live music venue to replace The Bakery venue is that this a simple and singular, short term solution, to a more complex long term issue.

WAM is investigating options for a music/creative industries incubator/hub space. Discussions have been had with smaller local music industry businesses such as managers, booking agents and record labels as well as at WAM's Music Council meeting and has found significant support for this initiative. According to WAM similar incubators have been set up in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.



## 7. Conclusion and recommendations

### Current situation analysis

At present, there is no evidence that recent closures are due to anything other than natural fluctuations in the market.

The closure of The Bakery may have caused a gap in venues in Northbridge with 400-600 capacity. The lease of Rechabites Hall has not yet been announced, but may provide an opportunity for local live music previously performed at The Bakery to be re-accommodated.

### Regulatory context

Ongoing regulatory reform is an important form of assistance provided by state and local governments to support the music industry, providing increased opportunities for musicians to play.

While there may be some issues around state and local government planning and approval processes, there is no suggestion these are more prevalent in WA than in other States. Planning system reform to give the 'agent of change' principle stronger standing to protect arts and cultural venues may be beneficial due to increased densification in Perth. A state based variation to the Building Code of Australia (BCA), similar to recent reform in Victoria, may also positively impact on the viability for small venues to host independent small-scale entertainment.

### Recommendations

Based on this review, DCA makes the following recommendations:

#### Recommendation 1 – Co-ordinate organisations that implement planning controls

DCA to support WAM to facilitate a roundtable with Department of Planning, Department of Local Government and Communities and/or WALGA as well as the MRA and key local authorities to identify the most efficient and likely policy and regulatory amendments that would impact positively on the small to medium venue provision and provide joint briefing to the Minister for Planning and Minister for Culture and the Arts with a view to recommending both immediate and long term solutions. A third non-government partner may include a planning industry representative or body such as the Planning Institute Australia.

It should be noted that without commercial and capital investment, the best regulatory platform for venue development will not guarantee private sector investment, given natural fluctuations in the market and demand. However targeted easing of regulation where necessary or opening up of opportunity has led to increased investment in other Cities in Australia and worldwide.



## Recommendation 2 – Review SASP website

DCA to update or discontinue its Sound Attenuation information website.

The SASP website includes 2008 information guides in multiple formats that provide specific information on the planning requirements and resources available for setting up a temporary or permanent live music or performance venue in WA.

## Recommendation 3 – Evaluation of Creative Industries Grants Program

DCA will undertake a focused review of the Creative Industries Grants Program to assess the effectiveness of the program categories, funding amounts and funding priorities in meeting the needs of the WA contemporary music industry, while aligning with DCA priorities. It will also consider if there are gaps in available funding criteria versus industry needs.

## Recommendation 4 – Arts and cultural portfolio assets and opportunities

DCA will investigate options for spaces and partnerships within the Perth Cultural Centre as part of the Perth Cultural Centre transformation project; and through the new venue management arrangements at the Perth Concert Hall.

This may include consideration of the contribution that could be provided by music event programmers and identify venue initiatives that can deliver live original music outcomes for these organisations within high-use areas.

## Recommendation 5 – Further research into the contribution of live music

Given the role of contemporary music in generating economic and cultural output, activating places and promoting WA, it is recommended that further research be conducted to articulate this contribution.

In addition, further investigation will be undertaken by DCA into factors regarding the decline of live music venues in outer metropolitan areas.



# Attachment 1

## Contemporary Music Venues 2008 Audit and 2015 Revision

This table is based on a live music venues database DCA created as part of a 2008 review of the DCA Contemporary Music Program. It is based on data from VROOM venue database and gig guides such as [streetsofperth.com.au](http://streetsofperth.com.au), [perthsounds.com](http://perthsounds.com) and [wagigguide.com.au](http://wagigguide.com.au). Using the 2008 database as a baseline, DCA, with assistance from WAM, has compiled a 2015 list of live music venues.

Indicates live music venue	Indicates non music venue	Indicates live music venue with frequent original music (2008-2015)
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Contemporary music venues	Area	2008	2015
Ambar	Perth		
Amplifier	Perth		
Arena Joondalup	Joondalup		
Belvoir Amphitheatre	Upper Swan		
Burswood Dome	Victoria Park		Closed 2013
Capitol	Perth		
Challenge Stadium	Mt Claremont		
Clancy's	Applecross		
Clancy's	Fremantle		
Deville's Pad	Northbridge		Closed 2015
Ellington Jazz Club	Highgate		
Fly By Night Musicians Club	Fremantle		
Flyrite	Northbridge		
Fremantle Arts Centre	Fremantle		
Geisha Bar	Northbridge		
Hyde Park Hotel	North Perth		Stopped live music
Indian Ocean Hotel/Indi Bar	Scarborough		
Jimmy's Den	Northbridge		
Kulcha	Fremantle		Closed 2014
Leederville Hotel/Funk Club/Babushka	Leederville		
Manhattans Bar/The Causeway	Victoria Park		
Metropolis	Fremantle		
Metropolis, City	Northbridge		
Mojo's Bar	Fremantle, North		



Contemporary music venues	Area	2008	2015
Mustang Bar	Northbridge		
Newport Hotel	Fremantle		
Norfolk Basement/Odd Fellow	Fremantle		
Perth Arena	Perth		
Railway Hotel	Fremantle, North		
Shape	East Perth		Closing 2015
Swan Basement	Fremantle, North		
The Astor	Mount Lawley		
The Aviary	Perth		
The Bakery	Northbridge		Closed 2015
The Bird	Northbridge		
The Charles/Perth Blues Club	North Perth		
The Civic Hotel	Inglewood		
The Flying Scotsman/The Velvet Lounge/Defectors	Mount Lawley		
The Moon	Northbridge		
The Quarry Amphitheatre	City Beach		
The Rosemount	North Perth		
Villa	Highgate		
YaYa's	Northbridge		Closed 2014
YMCA Youth (HQ)	Leederville		
Albion Hotel	Cottesloe		
Armadale Tavern	Armadale		
Art Gallery WA	Perth		
Balmoral Hotel	Victoria Park		
Bar 120	Sorrento		
Bar 459	North Perth		
Bayswater Hotel	Bayswater		
Belgian Beer Café	Perth		
Bentley's Bar and Bistro	Bentley		
Breakwater Tavern	Hillarys		
Brisbane Hotel	Highgate		
Captain Stirling Hotel	Nedlands		
Carine Glades Tavern	Duncraig		
Carlisle Hotel & Motel	Carlisle		
City Farm	East Perth		
Clancy's	City Beach		
Commercial Tavern	Midland		
Common Room	Northbridge		



<b>Contemporary music venues</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2015</b>
Como Hotel	Como		
Connections	Northbridge		
Cottesloe Beach Hotel	Cottesloe		
Craigie Tavern	Craigie		
Creatures Next Door	Fremantle		
Crown	Victoria Park		
Dianella Tavern	Dianella		
Elephant and Wheelbarrow	Northbridge		
Fenians	Perth		
Foundry Pub Grill	Cannington		
Fremantle Workers Club	Fremantle		
Gilkinsons (Dance Studio)	Perth		
Girraween Tavern	Girraween		
Globe Court - 140 William	Perth		
Gosnells Hotel	Gosnells		
Grand Boulevard Tavern	Joondalup		
Guildford Hotel	Guildford		Damaged by fire 2008
Hamilton Hill Tavern	Hamilton Hill		
Herdsman Lake Tavern	Wembley		
High Road Hotel	Riverton		
His Majesty's Theatre	Perth		
Hotel Dianella	Dianella		
Hotel Northbridge	Northbridge		
Inglewood Hotel	Inglewood		
J.B. O'Reilly's	West Leederville		
Jarrahdale Tavern	Jarrahdale		
Joe's Juice Joint	Northbridge		
Joondalup City Hotel	Joondalup		
Junction Hotel Midland	Midland		
Kalamunda Hotel	Kalamunda		
Kardinya Tavern	Kardinya		
Kewdale Hotel	Kewdale		
Kings Park Amphitheatre	Perth		
Kingsley Tavern	Kingsley		
Lakers Tavern	Forrest Lakes		
Left Bank	Fremantle		
Legends Tavern	Attadale		
Leisure Inn Rockingham	Rockingham		
Leopold Hotel	Bicton		
Little Creatures Loft	Fremantle		



<b>Contemporary music venues</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2015</b>
Llama Bar	Subiaco		
Luxe Bar	Mount Lawley		
Lynwood Arms Hotel	Ferndale		
Mandurah Performing Arts Centre	Mandurah		
Mercure Hotel	Perth		
Melbourne Hotel	Perth		
Mindarie Marina Hotel	Mindarie		
Minsky's Bar & Grill	Nedlands		
Moondyne Joe's	Fremantle		
Movies by Burswood	Burswood		
Mundaring Weir Hotel	Mundaring		
Northlands Tavern	Balcatta		
Novak's Tavern	Northbridge		
Ocean Beach Hotel	Cottesloe		
Octagon Theatre	Crawley		
Odin Tavern	Balcatta		
Orient Hotel	Fremantle		
Oxford Hotel	Leederville		
Paddington Ale House	Mount Hawthorn		
Paddy Hannan's	Victoria Park		
Parker	Northbridge		
Perth Concert Hall	Perth		
Players Bar	Mandurah		
PS Art Space	Fremantle		
Quokka Arms	Rottnest		
Raffles Hotel	Canning Bridge		
Rangeview Hotel	Eden Hill		
Robinson Pavilion	Claremont		
Rosie O'Gradys	Fremantle		
Rosie O'Grady's	Northbridge		
Sail and Anchor	Fremantle		
Seaview Tavern	Fremantle		
Silver Sands Tavern	Mandurah		
Somerville, UWA	Crawley		
State Theatre Centre – Heath Ledger Theatre	Northbridge		
State Theatre Centre– Studio Underground	Northbridge		
Subiaco Hotel	Subiaco		
Swanbrook Winery	Swan Valley		
The Beat	Northbridge		Closed 2014
The Brass Monkey	Northbridge		
The Carine	Duncraig		



<b>Contemporary music venues</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2015</b>
The Court Hotel	Northbridge		
The Good Shepherd	Leederville		
The Greenwood	Greenwood		
The Hip-E Club	Leederville		
The Jazz Cellar	Mount Hawthorn		
The Laneway Lounge	Perth		
The Manor	Leederville		
The Mighty Quinn	Tuart Hill		
The Queens	Highgate		
The Regal Theatre	Subiaco		
The Rocket Room	Northbridge		
The Ruby Room	Victoria Park		
The Shed (re-branding The Sky Bar)	Northbridge		
The Vic	Subiaco		
Tradewinds Hotel	Fremantle, East		
Universal Bar	Northbridge		
Village Green Bar	Hillarys		
Wanneroo Tavern	Wanneroo		
Wembley Hotel	Wembley		
Whitfords Tavern	Hillarys		
Windsor Hotel	South Perth		
Woodbridge Hotel	Guildford		
<b>Total live music</b>		<b>138</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Total live 'original' music</b>		<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>



## Attachment 2

**Table 1. Project funding distributed into the WA contemporary music industry through Contemporary Music/Creative Industries Programs 2002-2014**

<b>Contemporary Music/Creative Industries Programs 2002-2014</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of applications</b>	<b>Total funding amount</b>
2002	17	\$152,300
2003	50	\$457,504
2004	62	\$595,999*
2005	90	\$1,048,286*
2006	103	\$1,167,838*
2007	81	\$1,289,523*
2008	83	\$627,521*
2009	40	\$476,840
2010	48	\$413,197
2011	57	\$433,533
2012	41	\$383,582
2013	48	\$368,693
2014	44	\$380,153
<b>TOTAL 2002-2014</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>\$7,794,969</b>

\* In 2004, the State Government committed \$5million over four years to support contemporary music in WA.



## Table 2. WAM Triennial Funding 2002-2014

WAM Triennial Funding 2002-2014	
Multi-Year Funding (Multi-Year Funding)	\$25,000
Annual Program of the Association for the calendar year 2002	
Triennial Funding January 2003 to December 2005 inclusive	\$720,000
Triennial Funding January 2006 to December 2008 inclusive	\$765,000
Triennial Funding January 2009 to December 2011 inclusive	\$1,273,615
Triennial Funding January 2012 to June 2014 inclusive	\$1,011,753
Triennial Funding July 2014 to June 2017 inclusive (amount is for first year of contract)	\$348,453
<b>TOTAL 2002-2014</b>	<b>\$4,143,821</b>

## Table 3. Strategic Initiatives/Ignite Funding awarded to WAM 2002-2014

Strategic Initiatives/Ignite Funding awarded to WAM 2002-2014	
Ignite - Regional Projects – Devolved funding for the RAMMPAAGE Program 2004-2011	\$603,583
Project funding towards the WAMIA Festival Director's position and the WAMIA workshops 2012 - 2014	\$308,000
Other/varied strategic initiatives	\$368,000
<b>TOTAL 2002-2014</b>	<b>\$1,279,583</b>



## Table 4. Sound Attenuation Support Program 2006-2007

Sound Attenuation Support Program (SASP) 2006-2007		
Applicant	Project title	Amount awarded
Ellington Jazz Club Pty Ltd	Alterations or minor capital works for sound attenuation purposes	\$24,612
Indian Ocean Hotel	Consultancies	\$900
Maylat Pty Ltd – Swan Hotel	Purchase of sound management/attenuation equipment or fittings	\$23,797
Fly By Night Musicians Club Ltd	Purchase of sound management/attenuation equipment or fittings	\$5,909
Artrage Inc	Purchase of sound management/attenuation equipment or fittings	\$22,769
Kulcha Multicultural Arts Centre of WA	SASP Industry Support Program	\$5,000
TOTAL AMOUNT		\$82,987

## Table 5. Total DCA investment into the WA contemporary music industry 2002-2014

Total DCA investment into the WA Contemporary Music Sector 2002-2014	
Grants Funding - Contemporary Music 2002-2014	\$7,794,969
WAM Triennial Funding 2002-2014	\$4,143,821
Strategic Initiatives/Ignite funding awarded to WAM 2002-2014	\$1,279,583
Sound Attenuation Support Program	\$82,987
TOTAL DCA INVESTMENT 2002-2014	\$13,301,360



## Table 6. Audience Development projects funded by DCA 2002-2014

Audience Development projects funded by DCA 2002-2014		
Project	Decision date	Funding amount
Leederville Festival local music stage	20/06/2014	\$7,720
Arts Radio Ltd - RTRFM 'The View From Here' - Produce twelve in studio videos of local WA bands to promote RTRFM and local music on a national level	20/06/2014	\$23,640
Goolarri Media Kimberley performing arts showcase	21/06/2012	\$30,000
Arts Radio Ltd – RTRFM to capture live performances of original local music for promotion, distribution and broadcast locally, nationally and internationally	18/03/2011	\$11,525
FolkWorld Inc (formerly Fairbridge Festival Inc) - Showcasing WA regional folk/roots artists, Fairbridge Festival 2009	23/10/2008	\$15,140
The Next Big Thing - Provide emerging musicians with professional recording expertise and production skills	23/10/2008	\$22,700
Arts Radio Ltd - RTRFM digitalisation of local music library	14/03/2008	\$20,800
FolkWorld Inc (formerly Fairbridge Festival Inc) - Showcasing Kimberley-based original music acts as part of the 2008 Fairbridge Festival	12/10/2007	\$5,900
Carnarvon Festival Inc - Incorporate a stage for local performers into 2007 Extreme Festival in Carnarvon	19/02/2007	\$13,890
Arts Radio Ltd - Partial funding for the third year of RTRFM's local music producer project	19/02/2007	\$23,600
Arts Radio Ltd - Partial funding for the second year of RTRFM's local music producer project	3/03/2006	\$26,970
Southern Forest Arts – Production and marketing of 'New Music from the Southern Forests', a compilation CD featuring original live music from WA artists	13/10/2005	\$15,600
Western Front - Professional development and expansion of the Western Front website promoting WA's Metal scene	13/10/2005	\$4,397



## Audience Development projects funded by DCA 2002-2014

Project	Decision date	Funding amount
WA Music Industry Association Inc - Development of an interactive website service to “provide a forum for the WA music industry to interact, inform, present and promote itself to WA and beyond”	21/05/2004	\$75,000
North Metro Music Club - Warp Factory TV Show - a music TV series focussing on WA contemporary music, with reviews, live performances, coverage of local music and product reviews	10/07/2003	\$20,245
Arts Margaret River Inc - Train established local musicians in the process of recording, producing and marketing a CD, resulting in a compilation package	10/07/2003	\$16,830
Arts Radio Ltd – RTRFM to re-introduce ‘Live at the Cornflakes’ program: a weekly live to air session by local original talent	11/09/2002	\$8,000
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT</b>		<b>\$341,957</b>



# Attachment 3

## **Cultural policy for live music and performance around Australia**

Cities around Australia have been exploring strategies to encourage live performance culture. In 2014, the Cities/Councils of Sydney, Marrickville/Leichhardt, Wollongong, Melbourne and Adelaide produced Live Music Action Plans and Strategies. South Australia and the ACT have also undertaken state-wide reviews of live music issues.

A comprehensive overview of Australia wide cultural policy for live music can be found on the [Live Music Office website](#). Below is a summary of the most relevant Live Music Reviews Strategies and Taskforce Plans.

### City of Sydney Live Music and Performance Taskforce

In March 2014, the City of Sydney Council unanimously endorsed a Live Music and Performance Action Plan that tabled 60 policies to better support live music in the City, and which they are now integrating into the day to day operations of the cultural and regulatory operations of Council.

Chaired by Live Music Office Policy Director John Wardle, the City of Sydney Live Music and Performance Taskforce comprised 10 experienced music policy experts from Sydney and interstate, as well as Council cultural, regulatory and youth services staff. The City of Sydney process immediately informed the establishment of a Live Music Taskforce in Wollongong in 2013, as well as the establishment of a joint Live Music Taskforce from the adjacent Councils of Leichhardt and Marrickville.

### City of Melbourne Music Strategy

In December 2010, the City of Melbourne developed its first music strategy following industry and public consultation.

In 2013, the Melbourne City Council approved the terms of reference for a Music Advisory Committee to be established to assist in the review the Music Strategy 2010-13. The Committee provides advice and guidance to the City of Melbourne about the development and implementation of a new Music Strategy 2014-17, a three year plan for how the City of Melbourne will engage with and support the industry to achieve this vision.



## Music Victoria White Paper

On 28th August 2014, Music Victoria presented their Music Industry White Paper/Positions and Priorities to representatives of Government and the Live Music Roundtable. The Music Victoria White paper put forward 19 recommendations grouped under five themes:

- Celebrate and promote Melbourne as a music city to increase opportunities for Victorian musicians and the broader music sector;
- Support development of Victoria's regional music scene to improve economic and social outcomes in the regions;
- Support development of Victoria's music sector to increase its capacity to generate positive artistic and economic outcomes;
- Provide targeted financial assistance to foster artistic development and sustainable careers for Victorian musicians; and
- Continue regulatory reform to reduce red tape impacting Victoria's music sector.

Theme five is viewed as an important form of assistance provided by government to support the music sector. The key recommendations related to this were:

Recommendation 5.1 - Reform the planning system to give the agent of change principle stronger standing to protect arts and cultural venues.

Recommendation 5.2 - Reform noise standards and measurements in the State Environment Protection Policy N-2 to protect venue and resident rights.

Recommendation 5.3 - Implement a state based variation to the Building Code of Australia to ensure Victoria's small live music venues are not faced with unnecessary compliance costs.

## National Office of Live Music

In 2013, the Federal Government initiated the new National Live Music Office to support Australian live music. The organisation received \$560,000 in funding for three years from 2013–14 with the specific aim of developing practical strategies for promoting collaboration and cooperation to support support of the venue-based live music industry. The office advises federal, state and local Government on key policy, regulatory and process reforms to support a robust live music scene. The National Live Music Office is administered by Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA).



## Valley Music Harmony Plan

Brisbane City Council commenced the development of a Valley Music Harmony Plan in July 2002. The plan was developed and released in 2004 in response to ongoing conflict that had arisen between live music, nightclub and residential uses in Fortitude Valley. Resolution of this issue is complex and there is no single simple solution. The Valley Music Harmony Plan was a first in Australia to establish a special noise zone and fund sound attenuation works for private residents as well as venues.

According to a 2013 [Griffith University study](#), Fortitude Valley's live music scene is the 'envy of the nation'. During the study, urban researcher Matthew Burke of Griffith University and town planning consultant Amy Schmidt compared the Valley's music management plan to those of live music centres in Sydney and Melbourne. The study claims the Fortitude Valley Entertainment Precinct has emerged as a model for live music hubs across the country, after having gone close to extinction 10 years ago.

The Valley Music Harmony Plan contains five management actions that aim to better manage the potential impacts of music noise while maintaining and enhancing the viability of the music industry and the vibrancy of the Valley.

The aims of the Valley Music Harmony Plan are to:

- Manage the impacts of music noise upon residents and businesses in an integrated way, without compromising the viability of the music-based entertainment industry in the Valley or the vibrancy of the Valley; and
- Promote and enhance the Valley as a valuable incubator for the development of original live music of all types and styles.

The principles underlying the above aims include:

- The music-based entertainment industry and the night-time economy in the Valley are important for a creative and prosperous Brisbane and form part of Council's vision for our city's future – Living in Brisbane 2010;
- Residents in the Valley will experience a higher outdoor ambient noise environment than expected in suburban residential or semi-rural locations, therefore residents cannot expect quiet internal noise levels with their windows open; and
- Residents expect to be able to sleep and enjoy their living areas and businesses such as cafes and restaurants expect to be able to operate, without excessive intrusion from music noise.