



Park Beach Hotel Motel



National Cultural Policy

This submission is provided by [REDACTED], a regional hotel operator actively involved in live entertainment delivery across NSW and engaged in industry and tourism bodies at a local and regional level.

In regional NSW, cultural participation is not driven by major institutions or one-off events. It is delivered week in, week out by independent venues operating on a commercial basis.

These venues are the primary access point for live music and shared cultural experiences. They are where audiences build habits, where artists develop through repetition, and where local culture is formed. This layer of the system is largely invisible in policy, yet it underpins everything that sits above it.

Current policy settings are directionally positive. The recognition of culture as part of the economy and community wellbeing is important, and investment into regional activity and youth engagement is needed. There is strong demand in regional communities to participate in live experiences when they are delivered consistently.

Where the system falls short is in how cultural activity is sustained.

Cultural policy often measures success through funded outputs such as events and programs. In practice, the system is sustained through continuous, unfunded activity delivered by independent operators. This is the part of the system that builds audiences, develops artists and makes larger outcomes possible.

The economics of delivering live cultural activity in regional areas are tight and increasingly challenging. Costs across staffing, compliance, security and production continue to rise. At the same time, audience price sensitivity remains. The result is that live programming is often marginal or loss-making and is subsidised by other parts of the business.

The direct impact of this is reduced frequency. Fewer shows means fewer opportunities for artists, weaker pathways and reduced access for communities.

In regional areas, this effect is amplified. There are fewer venues and fewer operators carrying more of the load. In many communities, a small number of venues deliver the majority of live programming and touring activity. When one venue reduces activity, the local ecosystem contracts quickly. Rebuilding that activity takes time and is difficult once momentum is lost.





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The delivery of live music in regional areas also relies on a broader touring ecosystem that is not well understood in policy settings. Access to artists is largely coordinated through booking agents and touring networks, where decisions are driven by routing efficiency and commercial viability. Regional venues are included in these networks when they can demonstrate consistent audiences and reliable delivery. If programming frequency declines or risk increases, regional stops are often the first to be removed from touring schedules. This directly limits access for communities and reduces opportunities for artists to build touring experience.

From an operator's perspective, the margin between success and failure in live programming is often small. It relies on experience, judgement and a deep understanding of audiences. Over time, operators learn how to get more right than wrong, but the risk remains real and constant. This is not a low-risk environment, and it is not well reflected in current policy settings.

If this delivery layer contracts, the broader cultural system weakens. Participation declines, pathways narrow and the pipeline of talent reduces. This has direct implications for national cultural outcomes, not just regional ones.

A forward-looking policy should more clearly recognise how the system actually functions.

In practical terms, there are a small number of areas where alignment could improve outcomes:

- Recognising independent venues as core cultural infrastructure, as they are the primary point of access for many communities
- Shifting a portion of support from one-off event outcomes to ongoing programming, with a focus on frequency and continuity
- Treating venues as delivery partners within the cultural system, not just hosts or applicants
- Strengthening regional ecosystems by acknowledging that a small number of operators sustain a large share of activity
- Supporting pathways by enabling repeated opportunities for artists to perform and develop locally

These are not large structural changes, but they would better align policy with how culture is actually delivered.

This aligns with the intent of the existing pillars. Cultural inclusion is strengthened through regular access. Artists are supported through real pathways, not isolated opportunities.





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Infrastructure includes the places and systems where culture is consistently delivered. Audience engagement is built over time through repeated experiences.

The key issue is sustainability.

If independent venues can continue to deliver live cultural activity consistently, communities benefit, artists develop and regional economies strengthen. If that delivery becomes unviable, access reduces quickly and the system takes years to rebuild.

Cultural policy will be most effective when it reflects this reality and ensures that the parts of the system delivering culture week in and week out are recognised and supported to remain viable over time.

Practical considerations for policy settings

From an operating perspective, there are a small number of practical adjustments that would materially improve the sustainability of cultural delivery in regional areas:

- **Compliance and regulatory alignment**
Licensing, council and compliance requirements are often inconsistent and increasingly complex. Greater alignment and practical guidance would reduce friction and allow operators to focus on delivery rather than administration.
- **Recognition of operating venues as delivery partners**
Independent venues are not just hosts; they are active participants in programming, promotion and audience development. Formal recognition of this role would improve how support is structured and delivered.
- **Support for regional inclusion in touring networks**
Touring decisions are driven by commercial viability, including venue capacity and expected audience size. There is an opportunity to encourage broader regional inclusion through partnership with agents and promoters, ensuring regional communities are not excluded from national touring activity.
- **Support through existing frameworks such as the 24-hour economy initiatives**
Better alignment with existing government programs could assist venues to operate more consistently, particularly around late-night trading, compliance and activation.
- **Acknowledgement of infrastructure and reinvestment pressures**
Venues are continually investing in upgrades, safety, compliance and audience experience. These investments are made alongside the day-to-day commercial risks of





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live programming. Recognising this balance is important when considering the long-term sustainability of the sector.

Cultural participation in regional NSW is delivered primarily through independent venues operating on a commercial basis, providing consistent access to live experiences. While current policy recognises the value of culture, it underestimates the role of this delivery layer and the touring ecosystem that supports it. Rising costs and tight margins are reducing the frequency of programming, which directly impacts community access, touring viability and artist development. Policy would benefit from greater focus on continuity, recognition of venues as cultural infrastructure, and support for ongoing programming rather than one-off events. Strengthening this layer will improve participation, sustain pathways and deliver more resilient cultural outcomes nationally.

I hope this helps,

