

We are happy to contribute our perspectives to the review of the National Cultural Policy. We know the sharing of live music and the hosting of live music gigs are an integral part of community life with a wide range of benefits for all involved – be they musician, audience member, volunteer and community at large. Supporting such endeavours is crucial for community flourishing.

There are many small volunteer groups operating in the community contributing countless hours in a huge variety of ways to host live music events of world class quality. Community groups host regular gigs, festivals, and school events - often operating for decades, including during covid and now. The community groups are mostly not for profit, 100% volunteer run, supported by networks, with minimal or no government funding from State or federal governments.

Small independent gigs provide a space for touring musicians to share their music, and a space for emerging artists to experiment, learn and grow their craft – vital for the strength of music and performance now and in the future. The range of volunteer community groups contributes to the diversity of musical expression and audience appreciation.

Gigs promote respect for the artist and musician, through attentive listening audiences creating a space for creativity to flourish – where all reap intangible rewards -volunteer, audience, musician and the community.

Dedicated volunteer groups operate through generosity and serendipity, relying on people donating their time and free/low cost venues for their survival. The economics for musicians and volunteer groups are very challenging, and getting worse. Budgets are extremely lean - basic costs are kept very low, however musical instruments do need to be maintained, and insurance premiums covered. Volunteers contribute greatly but it can be a difficult balance. Applying for scarce insecure grants takes time and resources which are in short supply, and often oriented to keeping the doors open for gigs. As volunteers we remain keen to support the economics of the musician who play for us where-ever we can – prioritising financial resources being oriented to musicians as we have seen first hand the difficulties in securing gigs that pay a reasonable amount.

The obvious concern with our model is we rely solely on audience attendance for artist fees which are subject to many dynamic factors. Most of us work in community spaces - churches, bowling clubs, art galleries - at little or no cost which essentially allows the whole model to function, so another concern is it leaves us vulnerable if the venue were to charge market rates at some point.

We agree with the pillars of the policy – particularly the focus on a place for every story. We feel that the policy review should include support for small, volunteer community run groups. Pillar 5 - the audience in our experience includes the community more broadly. We have seen the audience becomes community and that through hosting live gigs community, including new and emerging talent, is grown. The longevity of community groups is a testament to their commitment and impact. We're able to present creative music to

audiences who crave an intimate listening experience, and one which would not exist in other commercial spaces — we're able to reach our niche audience in ways other organisations/venues cannot.

Submitted by:

- 8 o'clock sharp has been operating for 25+ years, hosting around 800 gigs, across 3 venues
- the Starfish Club has been operating for 30 + years existence, first two years weekly performances then moving to monthly, with approximately 440 shows hosted.
- Monday Night Confessions has been running since October 2022. We do about 40 gigs a year so we've probably hosted about 140 shows to date.
- The Living Room Theatre – is in its 26th year, has produced 29 original theatrical works. In the last two years has hosted 121 concerts/gigs.
- Church Street Studios
- Live at the Village