

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## The Night Cat

Submitted: On behalf of a for-profit arts business

Hi there, I'd like to submit for this cultural policy on behalf of my for profit live music venue, The Night Cat at 137-141 Johnston Street Fitzroy.

The Night Cat has been in operation for 28 years and presents at least 150 nights of performance per year often with up to 5 bands on a night. On a busy weekend we will provide performance space for 100 musicians and more as our specialty is presenting ethnically diverse, danceable music. As a venue we have strong roots in the Latin and African communities and present a diverse range of artists.

Recently we have upgraded staging, acoustic treatment, soundproofing, audio production and lighting to the status of a world class venue.

As a venue we have completed an equity action plan to design a future where we are more inclusive.

The biggest challenges for us in terms of infrastructure are:

Installing disabled toilets

Installing a ramp for performers with disability

Building a new dressing room for artists that includes an accessible bathroom

Building new toilets for customers - the existing toilets are decrepit.

Architectural plans are in place for these renovations but the cost is \$400,000.

There is little logic in spending this amount on a building that I don't even own.

However, if government were to help with some of the cost it would make a lot more sense.

Owning a for profit live music venue is a labour of love. There is not a lot of profit to speak of but a great amount of joy in providing the performance space, connecting with the artists and experiencing the joy and happiness of young people as they engage with the music that they love.

It is particularly galling to see the level of funding provided to a venue such as the recital centre. In direct competition with for profit venues, this fully funded building is lucky to be even open 30 nights a year. The expense to promoters and artists is farcical and while they have everything that opens and shuts in terms of production and staffing levels, what they give to the artistic community is largely insult. When one of our production team recently worked there he was charged \$550 for the use of a fog machine! \$550! AS a venue we provide free fog for any artists that want it, which most do. These types of ridiculous expenses are what keeps govt funded venues dark most nights.

I understand that politicians like to build buildings and put their name on them and feel like they've done something. Music lovers though, they are staying away from these venues in droves and are populating the venues such as the Night Cat that have these strong connections with community.

A more effective cultural policy would enable the for profit venues that are at the coal face of artistic output to improve their infrastructure and create a better and safer and more inclusive environment for the community as a whole.

Thanks for considering

John Standford Owner

the night cat