

Live Music

Acknowledgment

City of Newcastle acknowledges the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land, and that they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of dispossession. Council reiterates its commitment to addressing disadvantages and attaining justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this community.

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Published by
City of Newcastle
PO Box 489, Newcastle NSW 2300
Phone 4974 2000 Fax 4974 2222
mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au
newcastle.nsw.gov.au

Introduction

Newcastle has a proud night time live music culture that has endured since the early 1970s. The music scene back then was a little raw and unstructured, with scant regard for what we know today as safe work practices and responsible venue management, however it's fair to say that the passion demonstrated by musicians and audiences alike was part of a wave of live music optimism that swept Australian cities and towns during that period.

Fast forward forty years and the city has matured from a predominantly in-your-face pub rock culture to now embrace a range of engaging live music settings and experiences in the night time economy. Changes in the music business landscape including online music creation platforms, recording and production technologies, shifting consumer tastes and a focus on venue safety reflects our city's ongoing evolution, community diversity and links to global markets. We know that the Newcastle community places a high value on experiencing and participating in live music regularly and that there is a depth of local talent and entrepreneurship that is as strong as it ever was.

There is also a large body of research that highlights the importance of live music in early childhood learning, youth identity, social inclusion and end of life well being. City of Newcastle (CN) recognises the role that music plays in contributing to these positive community outcomes as well as the contribution it makes to the city's night time economy through employment opportunities and place activation. This strategy seeks to formally embed the principles of creativity and inclusion associated with live music into strategic thinking as the city grows. This will enable us to create a built environment that encourages and celebrates live music as well as to recognise the need to provide residential amenity for those living in higher density urban centres.

In February 2018 City of Newcastle made a commitment to protecting the Newcastle live music industry guided by evidence based research and examples of good practice in this sector. In making this commitment the City recognised the role it can play through advocating for changes to planning legislation, by the creation of the Newcastle Live Music Task Force to lead change and in nurturing all ages music through CN managed venue provision for rehearsal and performance.

City of Newcastle is aware that no single agency or individual can deliver sustainable growth in live music sector. Positive gains will only be made through investment in the development and monitoring of tangible actions, collaborations and partnerships that provide opportunities for a diverse and inclusive music sector. It is clear that change is a constant in our lives and CN will commit to keeping this strategy up to date as new challenges and opportunities arise so that live music remains a key component of Newcastle's night time economy and cultural landscape.

The overall aim of this strategy is to support a vibrant and sustainable live music sector in Newcastle.

Rock concert at Nobbys Beach, January 1977

104 009296 - 104 009300
Newcastle Morning Herald Collection
Newcastle Region Library



Executive Summary

Live music has been making a positive contribution to the Newcastle community and night time economy for more than forty years. As a community we've continued to incubate and support new talent, venues and audiences against a backdrop of social and built environment changes. To reinforce the contribution live music makes to our city, we've undertaken a body of research and community engagement to develop an action plan that will deliver on this.

The City of Newcastle's (CN) vision for our night time economy includes a vibrant live music scene based on safe and flexible public transport, good practice venue design, residential amenity and a clear set of guidelines for the development and management of live music and sound. The community and music sector stakeholders have also told us that they place a high value on the cultural and economic contribution that live music makes to the city's identity and well being and that there is a need to manage residential amenity and encourage music sector growth.

Planning for a built environment that is reliant on mixed use urban village centres means that governments of all levels will need to collaborate to ensure that residential amenity is maintained, entertainment precincts are identified, venues are encouraged to develop and audiences have safe, flexible transport options to move from performances to home. This work needs to be done using a range of clear legislative controls so that noise levels can be quantified, managed and resolved as required. Further, research will need to be undertaken around improved sound attenuation and advice provided to cultural entrepreneurs to assist in the understanding of planning and compliance legislation.

As the city changes, we will see adaptive re-use of existing buildings for the establishment of new live music venues as well as the upgrade of older venues as audience tastes continue to evolve and the night time economy grows. Venues themselves evolve too as they

seek to add value to their place in the market and as city changes around them.

As a community we've continued to incubate new local talent, venues and audiences against a backdrop of social change and urban renewal. To reinforce the contribution live music makes to our city, we've undertaken a body of research and community engagement to develop an action plan that will achieve this commitment.

Following extensive research and engagement with both music industry stakeholders and the wider community, CN has captured data and feedback that can be summarised under 5 (five) key themes where actions can be delivered to improve to the live music sector:

venue management and safety

promotion, development and diversification of music sector

conflict mitigation between live music venues and surrounding communities

definition, awareness of and expectation management of music precincts

transport mode diversity and service flexibility

In response to these themes CN has developed an Action Plan (refer page 27) that will contribute to sustainable growth of live music in Newcastle. These actions are clustered against the themes above and will be monitored and reported annually using the Newcastle Live Music Task Force as a reference panel to ensure that tangible progress is being made and/or to consider new evidence and trends in live music development.



Newcastle 2030
Community
Strategic Plan

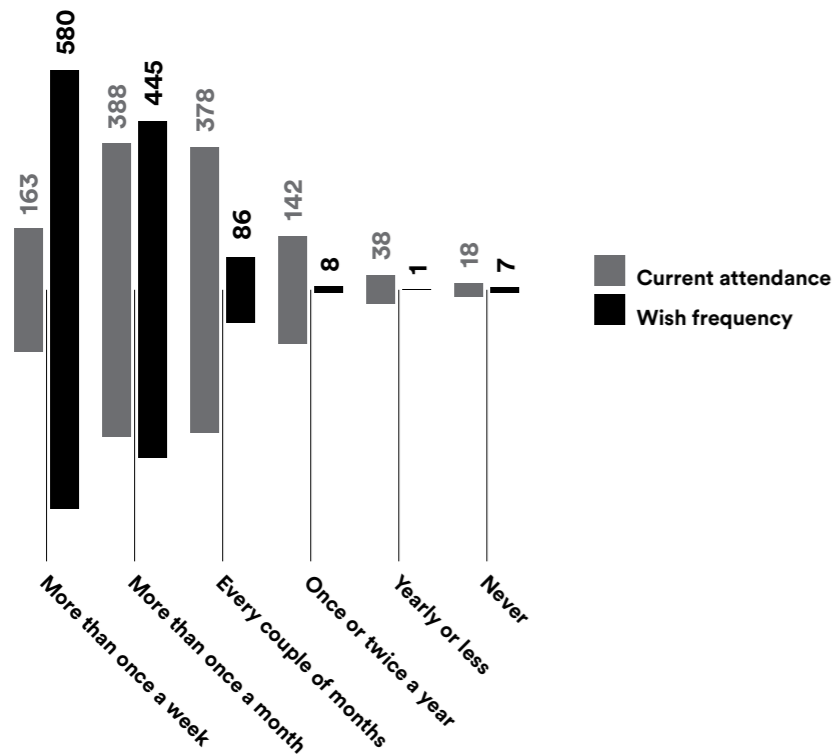
Newcastle
After Dark Strategy
2018–2020

Live Music
Strategy
2019–2023

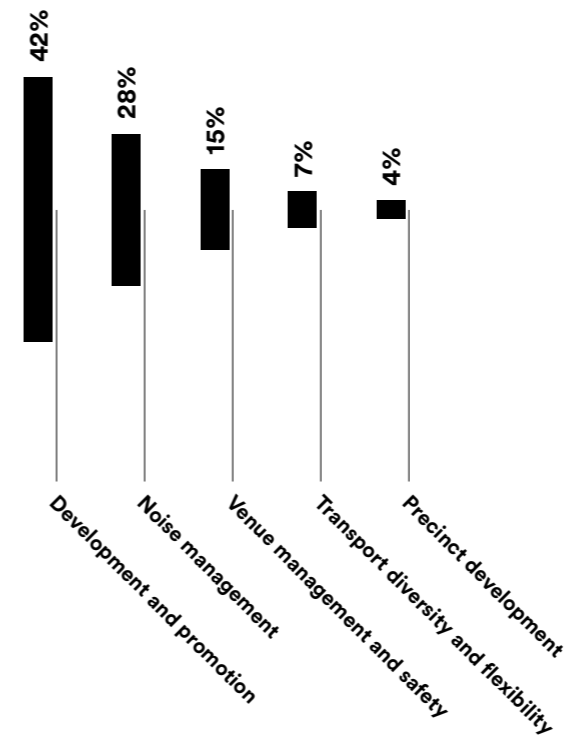
Online mapping and survey results

1130 survey responses received

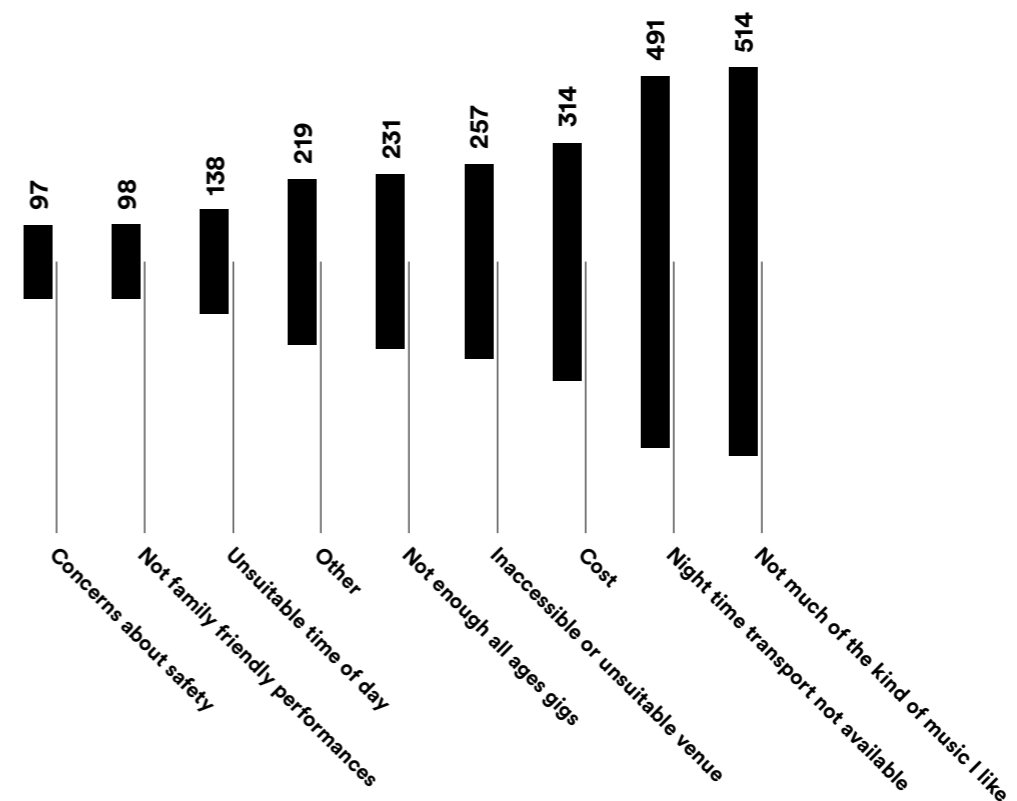
How often you are currently attending live music versus how often you would like to be going?



IDENTIFIED THEME



What are the things that prevent you seeing more live music in Newcastle?

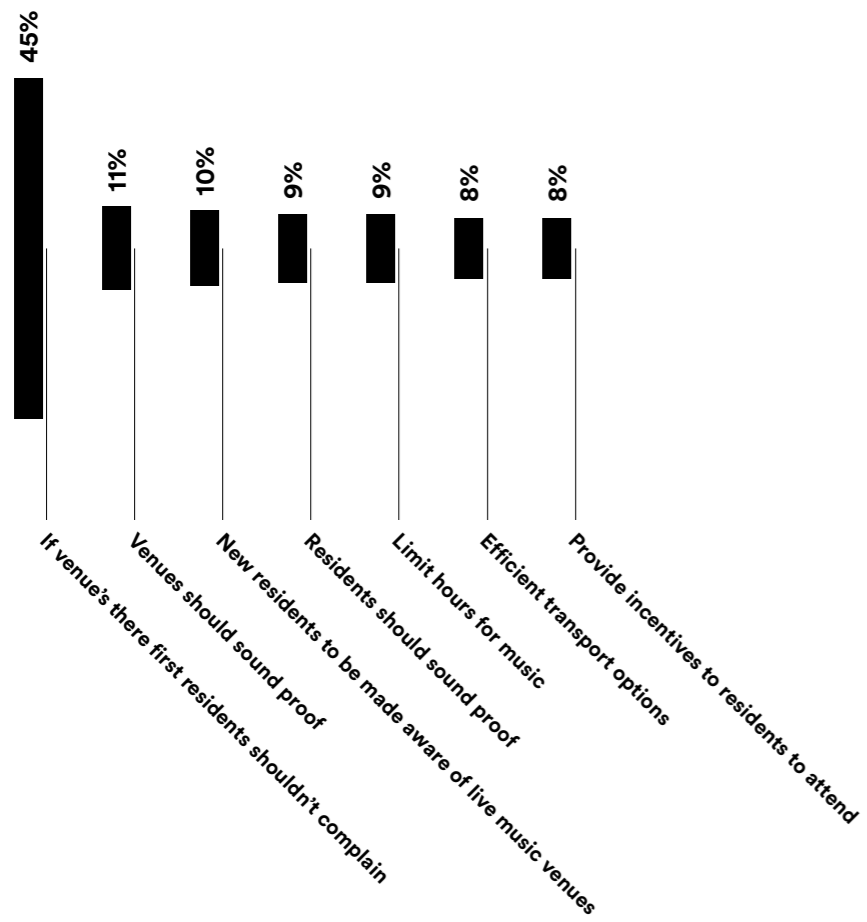




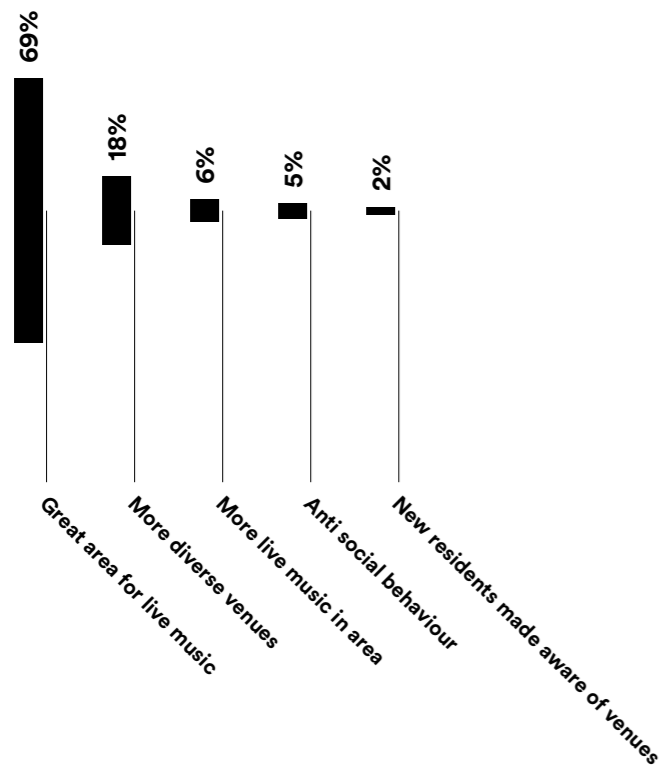
Foemen The Prince of Wales
Photo by Dan Lynch

“Newcastle has such a wonderful history of live music and it has such potential to really be an integral part of helping this city stand out as a vibrant, varied, inclusive place to live or visit.”

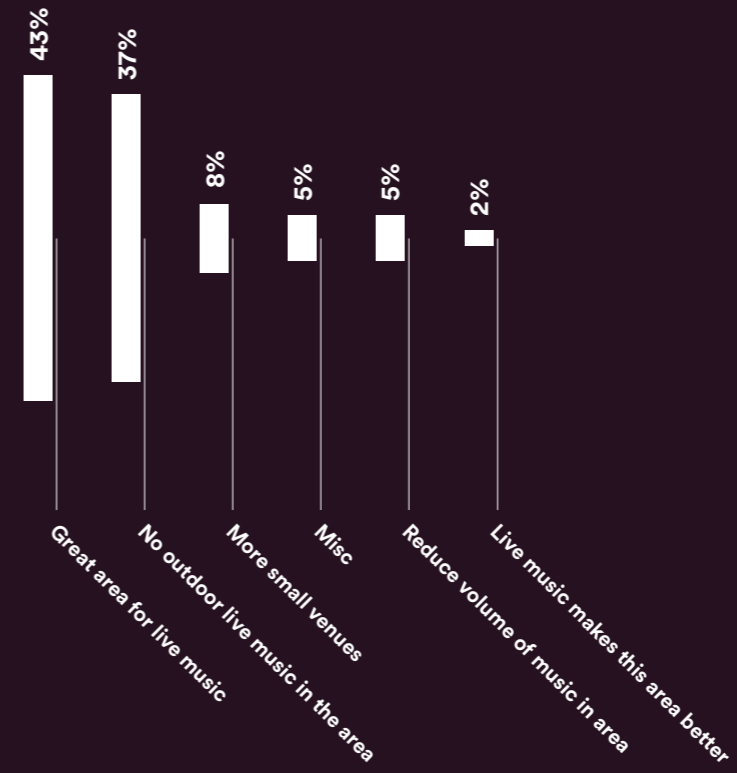
What could be done to improve the quality of life for residents living near live music venues or performances areas?



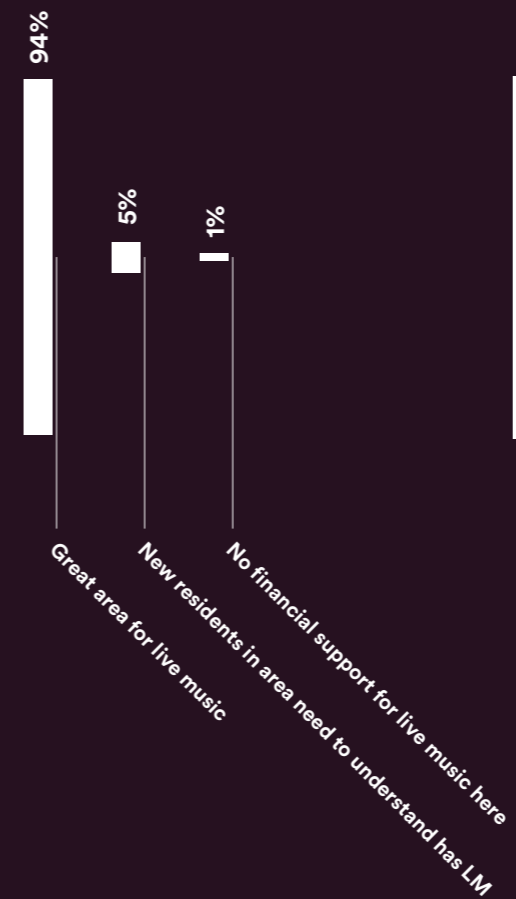
HAMILTON / MAYFIELD / BROADMEADOW



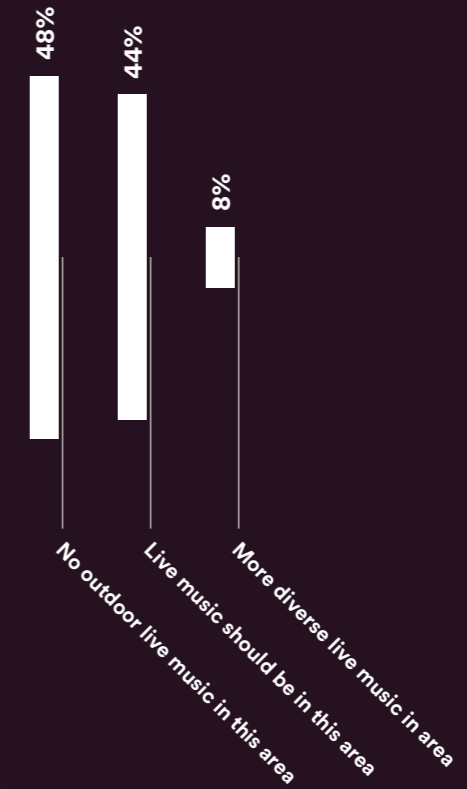
EAST END



WEST END



HONEYSUCKLE



Undertaken across August 2018,
the Newcastle Live Music Census
identified the following:

Gigs		Venues	
TOTAL	471	Hotels	41
		Clubs	16
		Bars	11
		Restaurant	3
Acts		Churches	2
TOTAL	699	Theatre	1
		Brewery	1
		Café	1
		Conservatorium	1
		Nightclub	1
Venues by Suburb		Theatre Restaurant	1
Newcastle	25	University	1
Hamilton	7	TOTAL	80
Merewether	6		
Wickham	4		
Carrington	3	Top 10 Venues - Gigs	
Cooks Hill	3	Lizotte's	19
Lambton	3	Battlesticks Bar	19
Mayfield	3	5 Sawyers	17
New Lambton	3	West's New Lambton	17
Wallsend	3	Hamilton Station Hotel	16
Adamstown	3	Customs House	16
Newcastle West	2	Lass O'Gowrie Hotel	14
Stockton	2	Stag & Hunter	14
The Junction	2	Wickham Park Hotel	13
Beresfield	1	Honeysuckle Hotel	12
Broadmeadow	1	Merewether Surfhouse	12
Callaghan	1		
Elmore Vale	1	Top 10 Venues - Acts presented	
Hexham	1	Hamilton Station Hotel	54
Islington	1	Cambridge Hotel	41
Jesmond	1	Lass O'Gowrie Hotel	36
Kotara	1	Lizotte's	34
Maryland	1	Wickham Park Hotel	27
Shortland	1	Small Ballroom Newcastle Hotel	26
Waratah	1	Queens Wharf Hotel	22
TOTAL	80	Finnegans	21
		5 Sawyers	19
		Battlesticks Bar	19

The Amity Affliction The Bar on The Hill
Photo by Dan Lynch





“Music in all its varieties
reflects a diverse, thriving
and inclusive society.”

The Preatures
Photo by Dan Lynch

“Keep music live, local performers in business and loving what they do!”

Julie Wilson Lizottes, 2018



Evidence and Key Messages

Aims

The aims of the Newcastle Live Music Strategy are:

Sustain and grow the live music element of Newcastle’s night time economy as described in CN’s Newcastle After Dark Strategy 2018-2022

Manage the impacts of live music on residents and the community without compromising the viability of the city’s live music precincts and venues

Facilitate opportunities for the all age music sector to nurture emerging local talent and provide career pathways in the live music sector

Provide safe live music participation opportunities for young audiences in Newcastle

Activate the city centre and growth corridors through the delivery of live performance in a range of indoor and outdoor venues and settings

The underlying principles to these aims are:

Live music promotes social cohesion and community well being

The night time economy is a significant component of the city’s overall economy and cultural identity

Residents are entitled to privacy and to not experience undue intrusion from live music venues and events

These principles have been identified through examination of relevant social and economic research, Australian Bureau of Statistics demographic and economic data and engagement with the Newcastle community through online survey and face to face workshops and interviews.

Scope

The Live Music Strategy focuses on music performance and community experiences associated with attending these events in an urban setting. The document covers all musical genres and styles and recognises that live music performance also requires back up from sub-sections of the music industry including training and education, rehearsal and recording, equipment hire and retail and marketing and promotion. Other aspects of city life including stage in life, employment, transport and demographic change heavily influence how people participate in the live music sector. These factors have been included in the development of this strategy.

Purpose

The Live Music Strategy seeks to deliver a range of practical actions in collaboration with partner agencies and individuals that achieves the commitment outlined in Council’s Notice of Motion of 27 February 2018 and associated strategic documents. City of Newcastle has made a commitment to managing and facilitating the live music sector as part of the night time economy through the preparation and implementation of strategic documents including the Safe City Plan 2017-2020, Newcastle After Dark Strategy 2018-2022 and this Live Music Strategy. These documents reference City of Newcastle’s Community Strategic Plan - Newcastle 2030 which articulates the community’s feedback on the need to support and deliver cultural and community programs, events and live music due to its contribution to vibrant, safe and active public places (Newcastle 2030 p.19 Section 3.1).

The Strategy is not a legislative document, rather it is to be read in the context of NSW environmental planning and assessment legislative framework. The document advocates for change in this area so that we move towards a planning and assessment model that provides clarity for evidence based decision making both in terms of venue development and management as well as quality of life choices.

Background

It is documented by Dr Gaye Sheather, author of *Rock this City* (Live music in Newcastle, 1970s-1980s), that the Old Beach Hotel (cnr Watt and King Streets) was the first hotel in NSW to be carpeted - in 1955. Hotels at that time were pretty much focused on serving as much alcohol as possible in a short space of time before being hosed out at closing. The introduction of carpet and the end of the "six o'clock swill" was the beginning of the evolution of the modern Australian pub and the point where licensing legislation and patron behaviour and tastes began to change.

Closely followed by these humble developments was the arrival in the early 1970s of night time live music in partnership with an explosion in numbers of eighteen year old baby boomers. These trends were national and occurred at a time when Japanese electronics manufacturing began mass-producing good quality musical instruments, recording equipment and sound systems. Armed with a handful of chords and some gritty lyrics, anyone could form a band and people would happily listen if cold beer was available.

In Newcastle the locals embraced the live music scene with gusto, attending loud regular gigs that occurred in pubs, clubs, surf clubs, taverns and outdoor festivals. Nationally recognised bands started to tour here and the local music crowd began to listen and learn from their sophisticated sound and production techniques. People traveled throughout the Lower Hunter to see bands on multiple nights of the week and before long some of these local acts achieved national status and then later still, international.

The local music scene grew until the late 1980s before venues and live music itself started to be influenced by further technological and entertainment trends. Pubs looked for easier income streams as noise, random breath testing and licensing legislation tightened up and audiences started to drift to other forms of music consumption and pursuits such as international travel. In the 1990s bands downsized to duos and DJs as the cost of keeping an outfit on the rails skyrocketed compared to static or declining live music incomes.

Sadly, allied with this emerged a binge drinking pub culture and with it came a wave of alcohol related violence. This led to authorities to look more closely at harm minimisation strategies, licensing changes and "one punch" legislation to curb this trend. Newcastle led the way with the introduction of what came to be known as the Newcastle Conditions or "lockout laws". This initiative commenced in 2008 and has contributed strongly to reduction in alcohol related violence and generated sufficient interest to be emulated by other Australian cities. Opinion remains divided on the impact of lockout laws on venues and live music. However, Newcastle's night time culture has matured and diversified to the point where live music is a strong part of the entertainment mix albeit in a range of more low impact venues (seventy seven as at September 2018).

Feeding into the mix of live music, audiences and venues are students and graduates of TAFE and the University of Newcastle. Skilled young people with qualifications in music, performance, production, business and industry enter the sector looking for professional opportunities.

The city has entered a major renewal phase in parallel with the introduction of light rail and the re-development of the former heavy rail corridor. The pace of investment and development has intensified in the identified growth corridors in tandem. It is now certain that many more Novacastrians will be living in mixed use urban villages often in apartment buildings above street level commercial areas that include food, beverage and entertainment businesses.

The Live Music Strategy aims to support the sustainability of the live music sector through collaborative actions addressing promotions, legislation, incubation and attraction.



Research and Community Engagement Overview

Considerable research and community engagement has gone into the development of the Newcastle Live Music Strategy including:

City of Newcastle Community Strategic Plan
Newcastle 2030 - Community engagement phase
2017

City of Newcastle After Dark Strategy - community
engagement phase 2017/18

City of Newcastle submission to the 2017 NSW
Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority's review of
the Newcastle Conditions

City of Newcastle Notice of Motion 27 February 2018
- Live Music Strategy

The formation of a Newcastle Live Music Task Force
in March 2018 to guide the LMS development.

City of Newcastle online community survey and
social pin point mapping June 2018

City of Newcastle live music industry workshop
August 2018

Newcastle Live Music Task Force live music sector
mapping June/July and October/November 2018

City of Newcastle submission to the NSW Legislative
Council Music and Arts Inquiry Hearing (Portfolio
Committee No 6) August 2018

City of Newcastle submission to the Australian
Government's House Standing Committee on
Communications and the Arts Inquiry into: Factors
contributing to the growth and sustainability of the
Australian music industry September 2018

Adoption by City of Newcastle of Newcastle After
Dark Strategy October 2018



Ollly Holbrow and his Empire Palais Players, 1931/32

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Ray Perkins Collection
Newcastle Region Library

Action Plan

The actions listed below are clustered into four themes; legislation, incubation, promotion and attraction. Delivery of these will require multiple agencies and stakeholders to work together to ensure that the opportunities to collaborate are maximised.

1. Develop a Strategic Plan for the music and arts economy in NSW

A State-wide strategic plan for music and arts economy growth would ensure that there is multi-agency and industry focus on an agreed set of targets and actions. Such a document needs to include a focus on developing young talent career pathways and audience engagement in live music delivery.

2. Develop a suite of planning controls to reduce the risk of land use conflict

The existing environmental planning, assessment and protections legislation in NSW needs amendment to reduce the risk of land use conflicts in zones where multiple land uses co-exist e.g. residential and commercial developments in mixed use zones.

The City will consider the use of s149 certificates (officially known as section 10.7(5) zoning certificates under the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979) to manage community perceptions in this regard.

3. Address overlapping regulatory functions

Current non-alignment of liquor licensing and environmental planning and assessment legislation is causing inconsistent decision making around venue development and management.

4. Provide improved noise assessment regulation and guidelines

The current multi-agency approach to noise management in NSW is not delivering consistent outcomes in terms of planning and/or conflict resolution. Existing noise guidelines are restrictive and should be reviewed to more specifically address land use conflicts and noise impacts within mixed use urban zones to facilitate the Night Time Economy. Noise complaint investigations, under the current legislation are problematic as definitions and boundaries are not clear and multiple agencies are required to work in partnership to bring matters to a resolution. It is recommended that the State government develop clear consistent guidelines to assist relevant agencies such as Councils and Licensing Police to undertake planning, assessment and regulatory functions in relation to noise.

5. Create a Night Time Economy unit within State government agencies e.g. NSW Planning and Environment, Create NSW and NSW Industry

The music and arts economy form an integral part of thriving night-time economies. Multiple State and local government agencies play a role in the facilitation and regulation of night-time economies in NSW therefore it is essential that these players be adequately resourced to be aware of the needs of the music and arts industry so that cultural business ventures are encouraged.

6. Implement the recommendations in the City of Newcastle's submission to the NSW Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority's 2017 Newcastle Conditions review

City of Newcastle's submission to this inquiry made a range of recommendations based on the City's vision for more low impact venues as part of a venue hierarchy model allied with a strong consistent focus on noise management and responsible service of alcohol.

7. Targeted funding for youth music and arts development through NSW Family and Community Services and Create NSW Grants Programs

During the community engagement phase of City of Newcastle's Live Music Strategy it was identified that the provision of youth oriented music and arts rehearsal and development spaces and opportunities were limited.

City of Newcastle owns and/or manages a range of community venues that will be made available for the purposes of youth music development and performance across the Newcastle LGA. It is recommended that the State government provide targeted funding, through existing programs such as Youth Week or the Arts and Cultural Development Program to enable young musicians and technicians to have the opportunity to develop their skills using this funding. City of Newcastle already partners with NSW Family and Community Services in Youth Week event delivery.

8. Live music venue liquor licence standard trading across NSW

Standard trading hours for live music venues would assist in the management of community expectations when making decisions around where to live as well as providing venues with a business model that offers a less risky return on investment. Plans of management for licensed live music venues need to include clear targets for the measurement and attenuation of noise as well as adherence to duty of care requirements for patrons leaving a venue.

9. Research and evaluate design solutions for urban noise

Improving the acoustic performance of venues and dwellings in urban settings requires stronger collaborations with design faculties of tertiary learning institutions, music industry stakeholders and the development sector. It is recommended that the State government lobby relevant Australian government agencies to facilitate improvements to legislation such as the National Construction Code so that standards for acoustic performance in building materials are given consideration in future amendments to this document.

10. Improved night time transport services

City of Newcastle's Live Music Strategy community engagement results have clearly indicated that the existing public transport delivery model operating in Newcastle is a barrier to participation in the night time economy. It is recommended that the current service delivery model be revised to ensure that there is a more flexible timetable aligned with venue and precinct operating hours. Further, it is evident that existing transport modes and routes to suburbs are not meeting the needs of those wishing to enjoy live music in the city centre and/or night time precincts. It is recommended that the State government examines transport alternatives with Keolis Downer and/or other transport providers that delivers customer focused timetabling allied with emerging technologies such as online communication, payment and ride share platforms.

Bold move

11. All age Live Music Development

As identified in Council's February 2018 Notice of Motion regarding the support of live music, a process is to be developed to make available Council owned venues like the Civic Playhouse and City Hall Banquet Room for in-kind use on certain days by live music providers catering for all-ages gigs.

12. Online Promotion

Engagement with the local music industry sector has identified the need for provision of an online resource that includes details for local and touring music providers including performers, booking agents, venues, accommodation and music equipment retailers. Support local music events that showcase local performers and match them with promoters, agents and venue providers. Integrate live music theming into destination marketing campaigns.

Yes Commissioner King Edward Park
September 1984



Actions

Goal	Action	Timeline	Identified theme	Lead Agency	Partners
Promotion	1 Develop a Strategic Plan for the music and arts economy in NSW	2019	Development and Promotion	Create NSW	City of Newcastle Live Music Office
Legislation	2 Develop a suite of planning controls to reduce the risk of land use conflict including notification in Section 10.7 (5) Planning Certificates	2020	Noise Management	NSW Planning and Environment NSW Environmental Protection Agency NSW Police	City of Newcastle
Legislation	3 Address overlapping regulatory functions regarding liquor licensing	2020	Venue Management and Safety	NSW Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority Liquor and Gaming NSW NSW Police	City of Newcastle Liquor Accords
Legislation	4 Provide improved noise assessment regulation and guidelines	2020	Noise Management	NSW Planning and Environment NSW Environmental Protection Agency NSW Police	City of Newcastle
Promotion	5 Create a Night Time Economy unit within relevant State government agencies e.g. NSW Planning and Environment, Create NSW and NSW Industry	2019	Development and Promotion	NSW Planning and Environment Create NSW NSW Industry	Live Music Office
Legislation	6 Implement the recommendations in The City of Newcastle's submission to the NSW Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority's 2017 Newcastle Conditions review	2020	Venue Management and Safety	NSW Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority Liquor and Gaming NSW NSW Police	City of Newcastle
Incubation	7 Targeted funding for youth music and arts development through NSW Family and Community Services and Create NSW Grants Programs	2019	Development and Promotion	Create NSW NSW FACS NSW Industry	City of Newcastle Newcastle Youth Council
Legislation	8 Live music venue liquor licence standard trading across NSW	2020	Venue Management and Safety	NSW Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority Liquor and Gaming NSW NSW Police	City of Newcastle
Attraction	9 Research and evaluate design solutions for urban noise	2019	Precinct Development	University of Newcastle Newcastle TAFE	City of Newcastle
Attraction	10 Improved night time public transport options including safe active transport routes	2019	Transport Diversity and Flexibility	Transport for NSW Keolis Downer Hunter Development Corporation	City of Newcastle Online Ride Share Platforms Community Disability Alliance Hunter
Incubation	11 Facilitate all ages live music development through City of Newcastle venues	2019-2020	Development and promotion	City of Newcastle	Non government agency partners, NSW TAFE and UoN Conservatorium
Promotion	12 Online resource development, destination marketing and live music advocacy	2019	Development and promotion	City of Newcastle	Newcastle Tourism Industry Group Destination NSW Newcastle Live Music Taskforce

Measuring our Progress – an evaluation framework

As we implement the action plan above we will learn more of the initiatives that require increased focus and/or are making a difference to the live music sector in Newcastle. We will formally review and report the strategy's progress two years after adoption and then after four years at the end of its term.

We will use the already established Newcastle Live Music Task Force to monitor progress using tools including:

Ongoing sector mapping to follow changes in live music delivery

Perceptions of safety in public places (City of Newcastle quarterly community survey)

Numbers of special events in public places and spaces including live music

Number of approved development assessments including live music elements

Case studies from projects arising out of the strategy and their evaluation

Night time patronage data analysis from public transport providers



Vellevide The Lass O'Gowrie

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Music Out of Doors Concert, King Edward Park, December 1949

104 000738
Newcastle Morning Herald Collection
Newcastle Region Library

Definitions

Built environment: human-made surroundings that provide settings for human activity ranging in scale from buildings to parks

Evening economy: 6 -10pm (Newcastle After Dark Strategy 2018-2022)

Night time economy: 9pm -1am (Newcastle After Dark Strategy 2018-2022)

Live music; music performed regularly by singers and/or musicians in hotels, bars, restaurants and clubs as well as in temporary venues such as the public domain, festival grounds and special events. Whilst it is recognised that recorded music played by DJs does form part of the live music scene, this strategy focuses on supporting musicians and the associated production and promotion of these creatives.

Growth corridors: locations in the Newcastle Local Government Area formally identified in planning instruments by the NSW State Government for increased population density in mixed used villages.

“By supporting live music you are ensuring Newcastle not only continues to support emerging talent in the music industry, you are also nurturing the broader creative economy that will produce the innovators and entrepreneurs of our exciting future.”

Thank you

City of Newcastle prepared this plan on behalf of the Newcastle community and would like to thank:

Many people have given their time freely and contributed a strong body of knowledge and research necessary to the development of this document. City of Newcastle would like to thank all community music industry members and CN staff that engaged with us during the research and development process.

Special thanks to the Newcastle Live Music Task Force members who have not only given their time willingly, but also reached out to the wider music industry to engage and seek their views. We look forward to working together further to deliver the actions in the document to keep the conversation going as well make progress towards nurturing the live music scene in Newcastle.

newcastle.nsw.gov.au