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Your Say  
2020-21 Budget Consultation  
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### **MusicACT Your Say 2020-21 ACT Budget Submission**

*MusicACT supports all aspects of the music industry by providing advice, access to resources, information and professional development. MusicACT pursues policy development and advocacy to government, business and the community.*

Thank you for this opportunity to inform the formulation of ACT Government's 2020-21 budget.

#### **Submission Summary**

MusicACT wishes to see clearly identified funding measures in the 2020-21 budget that include:

1. Multi year funding (four years) of no less than \$200,000 per year commitment to MusicACT. This will place the organisation on a secure footing able to plan for and build the governance and program capacity to consolidate and grow its much needed professional development program plus other music industry development initiatives.
2. The creation of an Entertainment Areas Implementation Task Force. The Task Force should be led at the highest level from within Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and briefed to engage with and work across the ACT Government, industry and community to develop and secure funding for a multi year program of initiatives to ensure this new cultural and economic development opportunity is maximised.

This includes how to quickly attract and have established a new mid (500 to 1,000)

sized flat floor live music venue that will form a cornerstone and catalyst for growth in the new city centre Entertainment Area.

### **MusicACT a new professional organisation**

MusicACT enjoys core financial support thanks to the ACT Government, from Australasian Performing Rights Association and Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society (APRA AMCOS), from our members as well as from one off project grants.

Since engaging its first professional staff in October 2018 MusicACT has, in line with grant agreements, rapidly grown a professional development program while deepening its engagement with the Australian Music Industry Network (AMIN) which unites Australia's state and territory music industry development bodies who advocate for the rights and well-being of our vibrant music industry and who deliver a continually evolving targeted program of professional development for musicians and music industry professionals.

Since commencing in November 2018 the professional development program, MusicACT's part time team and committee members have presented over 70 workshops, seminars and creative development opportunities to over 1,300 musicians and music industry professionals. 80 musicians and music industry professionals have been engaged and 140 volunteers have assisted.

MusicACT's rapid emergence as a credible professional development organisation compares very favourably with other AMIN jurisdictions. This work must continue and needs to be placed on a secure multi year funding footing to provide deeper and secure pathways for both emerging and established professional musicians. The professional development program should remain accessible and delivered at no or low cost for participants.

Importantly, emerging and professional musicians do not seek ongoing funding, just a leg up. The professional development support they demand is almost always music business focussed, their consistent ambition is to seek financial sustainability. While foremost creative artists professional contemporary musicians see themselves as in business, and located in an industry with local, national and international opportunities.

MusicACT's committee of management has produced a strategic plan that emphasises the importance of a whole of government and industry approach essential to reaping the full cultural, social and economic benefits of a thriving music industry. While the plan is ambitious in scope we have also prioritised.

### **ACT music industry priority - new venues**

Our number one music industry goal is to reverse the decline in ACT live music venues.

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of having access to a vertically integrated and viable variety of live performance venues ranging from intimate cafes and bars through to arenas, stadiums and broad acre festival sites in beautiful outdoor natural settings. Live music is the engine room of the music industry and giving artists and audiences easy access is essential to success and growth.

We are absolutely delighted with the release of the ACT Government's Entertainment Action Plan on 31 October.

The Action Plan both acknowledges the fall in the number of live music venues, the significant contribution the live music industry and night time economy makes to the ACT, and its potential for growth.

We know in other jurisdictions that live music venues, and the night time economy can thrive and its growth accelerate thanks to government led structural reform and investment while in others, in NSW notably, with poor planning, inappropriate regulatory constraints and a failure to provide a positive investment climate for cultural and entertainment infrastructure that this leads to decline. For the first time in 2018, the state of Victoria saw more tickets sold to live performances than in NSW.

MusicACT with our national partners including the Australian Live Music Office (LMO) the Australian Music Industry Network (AMIN), and APRA AMCOS we have invested in revealing the fundamental structural constraints and regulatory impediments negatively impacting a viable and thriving live music sector throughout Australia. In the ACT in particular it is the impact of urban consolidation, a land use policy focused on the highest and best use that favours residential and relatively narrow forms of commercial, retail and office development ahead of live music, festivals and cultural use in our city, town centres and elsewhere. And of course the huge constraints arising from inappropriate sound regulation.

All this is now set to change.

The response to MusicACT's "Let Music Live" campaign, the decade of work put in by previous MusicACT committees and many many others has been transformational. The deep consultation and engagement by the ACT government resulting in the creation of October 2019's Entertainment Action Plan is incredibly encouraging and has thrust the ACT to the head of the pack in terms of what is possible for growth in our live music industry and night time economy.

We are excited and encouraged by the latest research from Brisbane City Council on the impact of implementing their entertainment area in the Fortitude Valley. This hotspot in Brisbane continues to experience an economic growth rate above the city's average. Then there is the incredible boost it has made to creativity, musicians careers and to the overall quality of Brisbane city life.

*“The vibrancy of a city’s nightlife is an indicator of its overall fiscal and social health. That’s why it’s smart public policy to plan for, manage and promote a city’s nightlife.”*

*Andrew Rigie  
Executive Director, New York Hospitality Alliance*

MusicACT believes it critical to the success of ACT government’s implementation of Entertainment Action Plan that this great new initiative be supported beyond making regulatory and planning reforms.

This includes the ACT Government assuming leadership to facilitate, and if necessary provide a one off, once only, capital injection, to establish a flat floor medium sized (500 to 1,000 capacity) live music venue to form a cornerstone in the new city centre (Civic) Entertainment Area and fill an essential missing step up in ACT live music venues. This proposal is ahead of any anticipated reuse or adaptation of the Canberra Theatre, if and when the proposed lyric theatre is built. The need is immediate and key to the future success of the new city centre Entertainment Area, it will catalyse growth and should be a music industry driven private sector operated facility.

Thanks again for this opportunity to contribute to the ACT Government’s formulation of the 2020-21 Budget.

We would be happy to expand on our submission and always stand ready to engage with and assist the ACT Government.

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Kind regards,

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