

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

At Jubilee Room, Parliament House, Sydney on Monday, 26 March 2018

LGNSW response to questions from hearing

Question:

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I have one more question relating to regional areas, and feel free to take it on notice. Particularly in the border areas we have enormous clubs and enormous bowling clubs, lots of poker machines and the clubs are very dominant in respect of food and entertainment. Do you have any comments on the way that has evolved, particularly in coastal destinations? For example, the club in Ballina is very dominant whereas the club in Byron is less dominant and the smaller venues in the pub scene have more of a go at putting on events. If you have one big club in a town, it kind of sucks the— maybe on the other hand it is an opportunity to put events on. Some of them do a great job.

Ms SCOTT: We would probably take that on notice. We can have a talk to the council members and seek their views on those specific examples and get back to you.

LGNSW Response:

After speaking with councils in northern NSW, LGNSW does not see that clubs are dominating the entertainment landscape. Councils recognised that there are some big clubs which hold many music gigs, but this is not viewed negatively. In some cases these clubs pay money to secure big name artists for the regions. Councils felt that there were other opportunities for musicians. For example, Lismore City Hall, a council venue, has been contracted to the Northern Rivers Performing Arts. Ballina has four pubs which have live entertainment and other venues (such as restaurants) are listed weekly in the Gig Guide in the local paper – Ballina District Advocate. Councils thought that the region also offered several music festival opportunities including Blues Fest, Splendour in the Grass, Tropical Fruits Festival, Nimbin Roots, Mullumbimby Festival and Ballina County Music Festival.

While the councils thought they currently had diverse music opportunities, an entertainment centre in the region would be welcomed. Musicians, during informal conversations with councils, have suggested that more smaller venues would be welcomed, but they don't view the clubs as negatively dominating the music scene. Councils and musicians are seeking diverse opportunities for live music and clubs play a part.

Byron Bay's iconic Beach Hotel has recently removed poker machines and this is an example that entertainment venues can continue to operate without poker machines.

<https://www.northernstar.com.au/news/pokies-to-be-removed-from-iconic-pub-as-soon-as-po/3318621/>