

# **INQUIRY INTO THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** Regional Arts NSW

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REGIONAL ARTS  
**NSW**

TO CHAMPION, DEVELOP AND SUPPORT THE CREATIVE ARTS AND  
CULTURAL SECTOR THROUGH THE NETWORK OF REGIONAL ARTS  
DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS IN NSW

A response to

NSW Legislative Council Inquiry

The music and arts economy in New South Wales.

from

Regional Arts NSW

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## Introduction

In our submission to the NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into *The music and arts economy in New South Wales*, Regional Arts NSW (RANSW) is responding from a regional perspective viewed through the lens of the different population sizes, distance from services and the diversity of regional communities as experienced by the network of 14 Regional Development Organisations (RADOs) in NSW. We also understand the arts to include music along with other art forms including visual and performing arts in all genres.

From the growth areas and higher populations of the coastal areas, the provincial cities of the tablelands and slopes and their surrounding towns and hamlets, to the far spread communities of the Western Plains, there is no one size fits all policy possible for this state. Any overarching policy must ensure that there are components that address the needs of the regional population.

The NSW Government response to the NSW Night-Time Economy Roundtable Action Plan does not fall within our remit as this seems to be a metropolitan based issue. Our services to regional NSW based on the RADO model as a state and local government partnership does not include the greater Newcastle/ Sydney/Wollongong conurbation. Our network commences from Mid Coast Council to the North, Lithgow to the West and Eurobodalla to the South and extends to the various state borders of Queensland, South Australia and Victoria.

This is an excellent opportunity for the NSW government to acknowledge the enormous value of music and the arts and the government's role in facilitating and working towards integrating the arts across all tiers of government and across government portfolios.

There are now so many 'fingers in the arts pie' (music being part of the overall arts ecology), that it is a confusing maze for artists to navigate. Within the NSW Government there are a number of agencies with an interest in the arts: Create NSW as the leading NSW arts agency, CIPMO for cultural infrastructure, NSW Health (NSW Health and the Arts Framework), FaCS, (Creative Ageing), Environment and Heritage, Liquor Gaming and Racing and NSW Education to name the most obvious. Funding and support for the arts can be accessed or activities are influenced by these agencies agendas.

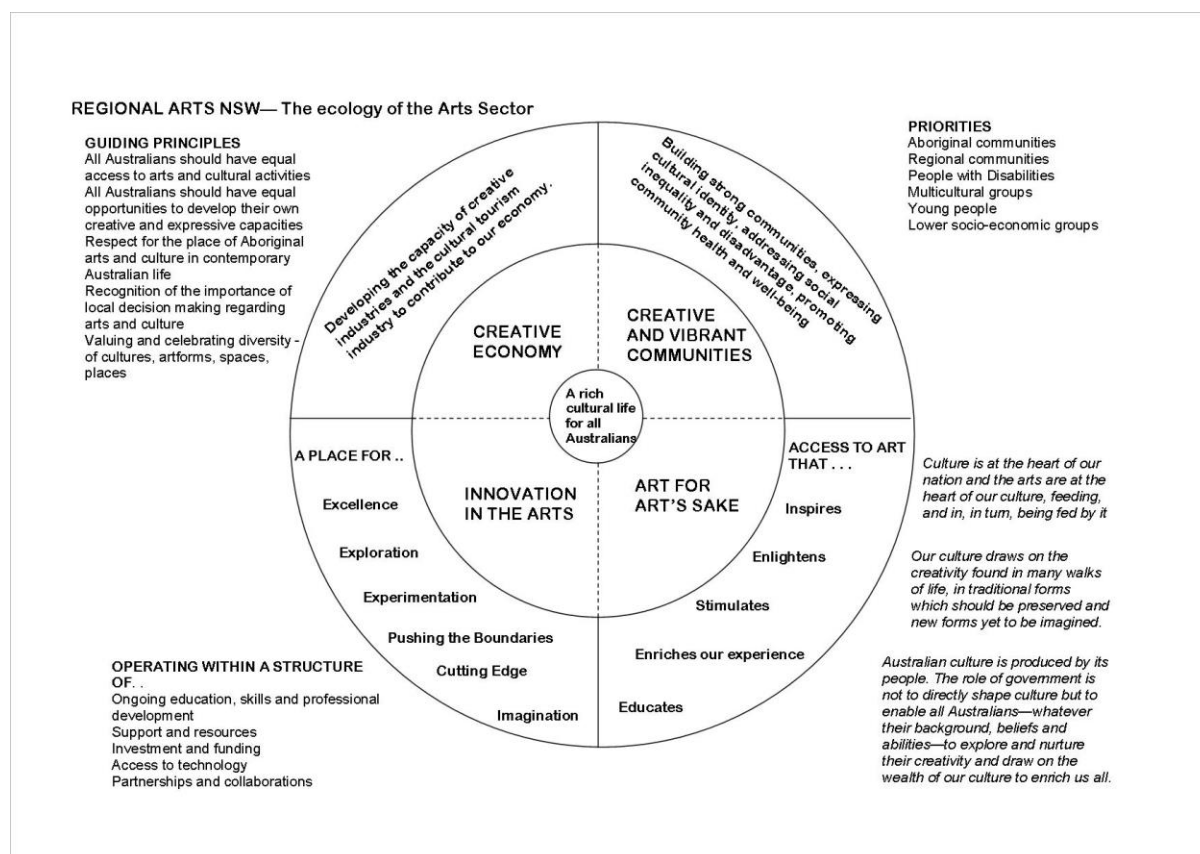
Local government is a key partner for the arts sector in regional NSW, as the major owner of cultural infrastructure (performing arts centres, art galleries, museums, community centres and rural halls) as well as being the predominant employer of professional arts workers in regional NSW. It is within local government that regulations regarding the practice of live arts events can be an obstacle.

In addition, national agencies supporting the arts include the Australia Council for the Arts, Department of Communication and the Arts and APRA AMCOS that supports the Live Music Office. ABC Radio programs such as Triple j's *Unearthed* program are invaluable in giving young regional musicians exposure and gigs.

To assist artists navigate the fractured nature of the sector, there the non-profit arts service organisations and peak bodies, including Music NSW, Arts on Tour, Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums and RANSW. These organisations are critical in providing industry specific support and programs to their stakeholders and a strategic communication channel between artists and government.

## The Arts Ecology

In our response to the National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper (October, 2011), RANSW developed its own model of the arts ecology (see diagram below) which is still relevant and reflects the many types and levels of every Australian's experience with arts and culture. It is a holistic model with four main inter-related areas (quadrants) involving all who work in the arts and cultural sector, as per the quote above. Each of the four areas / quadrants is not mutually exclusive and there is considerable 'movement' between them with development in one area impacting on the others. In this model the four areas / quadrants are connected and one cannot thrive without the balancing contributions from the others.



Also important to the model are the underlying and underpinning guiding principles of access and equity, a strong, well-resourced infrastructure and a commitment to priority areas such as Aboriginal communities, regional communities, people with disabilities, multicultural groups, young people and lower socio-economic groups.

From a government perspective, the advantage of this model is that investment and support in any of these areas/quadrants will ripple through to the other areas/quadrants with significant gains for individuals, communities and for the State in terms of economic and social outcomes and making NSW a better place to live, work and visit. This model promotes a whole-of-government approach and cross-government initiatives and partnerships which will greatly benefit the arts and culture sector through easing the pressure on arts funding and diversifying and expanding its sources of support.

From a policy maker perspective, it is important that the arts ecology is acknowledged and understood as a whole-of-government responsibility with the arts sector recognised as valuable to and an integral part of many different portfolios.

### **Recommendations to the Inquiry**

Looking specifically at the music sector as part of this submission, there are a number of **current programs and opportunities** for regional musicians that should be continued with increased support:

- The *Live and Local* program is an excellent initiative to encourage local councils to support local musicians in alternative venues and should be continued and expanded. It is especially important as it gives regional artists the opportunity to build a career in their own community.
- The programs for young musicians delivered by Music NSW particularly the *Indent All Ages Tour* and *Indent Development Grants* should be expanded.
- The 17 NSW Regional Conservatoriums are the training ground for young musicians and in many cases, the only opportunity for local audiences to experience classic and jazz concerts. Professional performance opportunities are a vital part of a musician's training and these organisations make a great contribution to the social fabric of a regional town.

A thriving local music scene adds to the liveability of a regional city, whether as part of an active pub scene, outdoor concerts in vineyards and paddocks, music festivals, community events and music doesn't exist in isolation from other art forms. Musicians play in art galleries, play in orchestras for musicals and opera productions, activate museums, play at official functions such as mayoral receptions and perform in multi-arts festivals. Music in all its forms contributes to community well-being. A thriving music and arts scene attracts cultural tourists and migration from the cities adding skills and diversity to the local economy.

RANSW recommends the following as **new initiatives** for consideration as part of this Inquiry:

- Establish a program for professional training, mentoring, peer support, performance opportunities and career development for young regional Aboriginal musicians on country.
- Support the development of new and emerging music festivals. There is no support for the organisers of small regional festivals in NSW. These festivals are the starting point for young regional musicians to build a career. This has been identified previously by RANSW.

**RANSW strongly endorses the submission by the Live Music Office.** Without reproducing its *Actions for Consideration* within this submission, the LMO's specialist knowledge and expertise in the music sector should be recognised and their recommendations applied to any policy development and implementation.