

INQUIRY INTO THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: lizotte's restaurant

Date Received: 21 August 2018

Keeping Lizotte's in our community...

Lizotte's has been at the forefront in its commitment to keeping live music and entertainment alive in Newcastle for almost 10 years. Our venue is unique – providing access to both Australian and world class artists in a small and intimate setting. We are well aware of the trials and tribulations that go with trying to successfully run a music restaurant. We previously operated three similar venues simultaneously. However, the financial and operational pressures in managing such a venue meant we were forced to focus our energies into just one venue here in Newcastle to remain successful. We feel it is important we come together to ensure live music and entertainment remains alive and well in the Newcastle area.

Bringing live music to Newcastle

- ◆ Lizotte's is a 110 year old heritage listed building
- ◆ Our 10 year birthday – June 6 2019
- ◆ Over 3000 shows across the venue's lifetime, including both local and international acts – and more coming!
- ◆ Some 38000 customers registered on our database, plus 30000 from the Central Coast and 15000 from Sydney – whom still travel to come see us!
- ◆ Not one official complaint
- ◆ No incidents of violent behaviour



Supporting the community

- ◆ Support for local musicians through our Live and Local initiative – showcasing Novocastrian talent every Wednesday night
- ◆ Support for local performing arts groups through showcase events – with over 25 different local voice, music and dance groups having performed here
- ◆ Hosted many charity events as well as donating countless prizes to local charities and initiatives
- ◆ A popular venue for weddings and other community events

Supporting our schools

- ◆ Supporting local schools through our High School Music and Performing Arts Showcase program – with over 20 different local schools having performed here. These schools have been returning to the showcase program every year for the last 8 years
- ◆ This is an exemplary program that can provide a blueprint for other cities in how to support and nurture the talents of young people in the community



Recommendations:

The following recommendations have arisen from our experiences in running Lizotte's as a key live music venue in the Newcastle region over the last 10 years, as well as many years personal experience in the broader music, arts and hospitality industries. These recommendations focus on specific strategies the Council could adopt to address the following goals:

- (i) to reduce the amount of 'red tape' faced by small music venues in promoting their business, and
- (ii) to take a more active role in supporting access to small music venues for the broader community.

Strategies to address these goals include:

- **Providing small music venues with more freedom in the distribution of promotional materials.** Advertising events or acts via promotional posters is a strategy which has long been adopted both in Australia and in other parts of the world, being an important part of the charm and cultural value of a city. New regulations or initiatives could be implemented which allow music venues to promote their acts more visibly around the city, whilst still ensuring the aesthetic integrity of our streetscapes.
- **Council support in promoting existing venues to the wider community.** Council can play a more active role in promoting live music venues as important cultural establishments in our community. This could be achieved through the establishment of a Music/Arts database or directory, allowing information about live music venues to be communicated to Novocastrians through more diverse channels.
- **Council assistance for promotion through conventional media channels.** Smaller live music venues often face a lack of funding for advertising their businesses through traditional media channels such as print media, radio and television. Unlike larger venues, smaller venues often have restricted sources of revenue without the inclusion of poker machines or TAB services. Furthermore, pricing for print or other media ads remains high irrespective of the size or reach of a venue. Therefore financial assistance from Council in promoting live music through media channels would greatly assist small live music venues.
- **Council assistance in promoting access for disabled patrons.** As a 110 year old heritage listed building, Lizotte's access for disabled patrons is limited, including having no disabled toilets. Grants and/or financial assistance to upgrade venue facilities to provide better access for disabled patrons would increase the inclusiveness of these critical city spaces for the wider community.
- **Financial assistance in the upkeep of heritage venues.** Given its heritage status, the building at Lizotte's will require continual upkeep if it is to remain a Newcastle icon for many years to come. Grants/financial assistance to do this would ensure these ongoing requirements can be met.
- **Security for live music venues in the face of urban development.** Council can pursue strategic measures to ensure development will never threaten the ability for venues to host musical events.

