



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Live Music Industry

SPEECH

Tuesday, 11 October 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Burke, Tony, MP

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Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (16:00): Live music has provided the soundtrack for the lives of Australians for a very long time, and live music is now going through an extraordinarily challenging transition, with the advent of streaming and difficulties that many are facing in having access to live venues. If you take a typical weekend like the one I have just had, the soundtrack went through Jimmy Barnes, the Oils, The Cat Empire, Josh Pyke, Sticky Fingers and a fantastic new album by Julia Jacklin, with a very special title that we would all ascribe to, *Don't let the kids win*. She is a wonderful artist from the Blue Mountains, whose album has come out only in the last few days.

New artists like Julia Jacklin or the members of Sticky Fingers are facing a very different situation in Australia to that faced by bands like Midnight Oil or Cold Chisel. Whereas previously bands were able to take a portion of their income from album sales and a portion of their income from live performance, many now have to work on the basis that the album sale part of the royalty is effectively written off because of streaming. What that means is that live performance needs to fill the gap if we are going to have the sort of live music industry in Australia that members of this House grew up with. Live performance needs to fill the gap in all three ways: access to live venues in Australia, access to live venues internationally and the importance of the festival circuit, which in some ways has provided some additional opportunities for Australian artists that were not there previously. However, with respect to all three, major decisions will have to be made by the government that will have a very real bearing on whether Australian artists are able to make this transition in getting continued access to live venues in Australia, internationally and on the festival circuit.

I saw a terrible time in Sydney when venue after venue decided to remove their stages and instead fill their venues with poker machines. What we established in place of that was the Live Music Office, to actively be in there helping remove the type of red tape that effectively reduced the volume to zero. Similarly, Sounds Australia requires a level of support which is not currently there. The Australia Council has made an attempt to fill the gap by providing some funding to both the Live Music Office and to Sounds Australia, but the Australia Council can only do so much. At the same time, we have some changes being mooted to visa fees which create a real question as to whether or not the festivals will be able to get the headline acts which are required to provide space for the local artists. (*Time expired*)