

From: [Sam Nardo](#)
To: [Committee Social Issues](#); [Greg Khoury](#)
Subject: Re: Inquiry into the state of live music in New South Wales – Post-hearing responses – 16 June 2026
Date: Monday, 20 July 2026 7:14:45 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image.png](#)

Dear Committee,

Please find our response below:

The major barriers to presenting more All Ages shows are operational, commercial and regulatory.

Compared to a standard licensed event, All Ages shows are generally more complex and more expensive to deliver. They require additional staffing and supervision, different venue configurations, enhanced security arrangements and compliance measures. There is also an increased level of risk associated with admitting minors into a licensed venue and, with relatively limited opportunity to generate a commercial return, many operators simply elect not to present these events. Pressure from licensing police can also weigh on a venue's decision to host All Ages or Under 18 performances.

Importantly, venues also lose the food and beverage revenue that ordinarily helps make live performances commercially viable. Together, these factors make All Ages events significantly more challenging to present on a sustainable basis.

Continuing the Sound NSW All Ages Program

The All Ages Program established through Sound NSW is a very positive initiative and should be commended. It recognises that presenting All Ages events carries additional costs and operational challenges and provides targeted support to help overcome those barriers.

Continuing and expanding that program would be an important step in rebuilding the next generation of live music audiences.

Age Bandwidth and Family Choice

There is a need for both dedicated Under 18 performances and traditional All Ages concerts. Young people mature at different rates, and parents have different expectations about when their children are ready to attend live music events.

Providing both options recognises that there is a broad age bandwidth within youth audiences. Some families will be comfortable attending an All Ages performance, while others will prefer a dedicated Under 18 environment. Supporting both models allows families to choose the setting most appropriate to their circumstances while providing more pathways for young people to engage with live music.

Commercial Viability of Under 18 Performances

The commercial barriers to dedicated Under 18 performances are distinct from, and additional to, the operational and regulatory challenges outlined above.

Artists generally need to accept lower ticket prices for Under 18 performances, while venues are unable to generate beverage revenue. To remain commercially viable, venues therefore need to recover a greater proportion of their costs through venue hire or other charges, creating a situation where costs increase while revenue potential decreases.

This commercial imbalance is one of the principal reasons so few dedicated Under 18 performances are presented despite strong industry support for the concept.

Prior to COVID, Century invested in a weekly dedicated Under 18 program to help develop future audiences. Like many venue operators, that investment has since been redirected towards rebuilding our core 18 to 25-year-old audience following the significant disruption caused by the pandemic. While necessary, this has left a gap in the audience development pipeline. Re-engaging younger audiences remains one of the most significant long-term challenges facing Australia's live music venue sector.

There needs to be support for such programs to be re-established across the dedicated venue and touring ecosystem.

Recommendation

A simple model could provide a venue subsidy based on venue capacity, restricted to genuine Under 18 performances presented immediately before an evening licensed performance. Importantly, the subsidy should offset venue operating costs rather than increase costs for artists or promoters. No alcohol would be served during the Under 18 performance, with standard licensing arrangements commencing only after that performance concludes.

This approach would complement, rather than replace, the existing Sound NSW All Ages Program, creating a two-pronged audience development strategy. It would support both traditional All Ages concerts and dedicated Under 18 performances, recognising that different artists, venues and audiences require different models.

Supporting both All Ages concerts and dedicated Under 18 performances is an investment in the next generation of music fans and the long-term sustainability of Australia's live music industry.

Thank you again for providing the opportunity to engage with the inquiry.

Warm Regards,

Sam Nardo

Chief Operating Officer

CENTURY

www.century.com.au

Century acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and the Whadjuk Nyoonga people as the traditional owners of the lands on which we gather and pay respect to their elders, past, present and emerging.