



Media Release – For immediate release

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NSW Music Festivals fiasco threatens future of live music

The new regulations for Music Festivals are arbitrary and threaten the future of all live music in NSW.

LPA's Chief Executive, Evelyn Richardson said, "These new regulations imposed by government without any consultation reflect a government that has no strategy for supporting live music in NSW, sending a signal to every live music promoter and festival organiser that doing business in NSW is fraught with danger and subject to the whims of the Premier's office. Clearly, this will be a major issue at the upcoming election.

"As it stands any festival can be added to the high-risk category at any time. All but one of the events targeted have proceeded with police consent previously so it seems any event can now be arbitrarily deemed "high risk" by government at any time and added to the list.

"Of those on the list some of them don't meet the stated criteria. This includes 'Laneway' and 'Up Down', a completely new festival yet to be presented in March 2019. 'This That' found out they were rated a 'high risk' event after media outlets contacted them. Yet only a few months ago they were singled out for praise by Newcastle police. [Police Praise This That & Scene And Heard Festival Crowds, Despite Some Drug Incidents Read more at <https://musicfeeds.com.au/news/police-this-that-scene-and-heard-festival-crowds/#VmMQ6msUUbqjVC1.99>]

"It's also not clear how new festivals will be assessed, what discretionary powers will be applied and what risk assessment criteria will be used. In the absence of any objective data or guidelines, it appears the main criteria used to declare a festival high-risk is determined by whether the Local Police like or don't like the type of music performed or the age of the likely attendees.

"The definition of 'Concert' versus 'Music Festival' in the regulations is also problematic and gives authorities much broader powers than the Premier is admitting. The concert definition doesn't make sense, isn't consistent with known industry definitions and essentially means a whole range of concerts in NSW could now find themselves subject to this new licence.

"We should also get real about the extent of the problem at music festivals. The government needs to provide evidence to back its assertion that so-called 'high risk' festivals have drug or alcohol incidents at a higher rate than occurs throughout NSW on a daily basis.

"This new licence isn't going to solve these problems and the government has shown no real commitment to backing them up with effective drug and alcohol prevention and harm minimisation programs to address these issues in the community.

"Music festivals are easy targets for a government in election mode but the reality is that Australia has a growing drug and alcohol culture, which crosses all ages and interest groups.

"We call on the government to postpone implementation of the new licence and properly consult to come up with a workable industry solution that secures the future for music festivals in NSW. The Music Festival sector employs thousands of people, supports small businesses, nurtures musicians' careers, and enhances cultural tourism in every city and regional area in NSW. Despite the Premier's rhetoric, right now the live music



industry in NSW is under serious threat from heavy handed government regulation and a clear lack of support for what is a significant multinational industry”, she said.

ENDS

Statement issued by:

Live Performance Australia
Australian Festival Association
Music NSW
Association of Artist Managers

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About LPA

LPA is the peak body for Australia’s live performance industry. Established 100 years ago in 1917 and registered as an employers’ organisation under the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*, LPA has over 400 Members nationally. We represent commercial producers, music promoters, major performing arts companies, small to medium companies, independent producers, major performing arts centres, metropolitan and regional venues, commercial theatres, stadiums and arenas, arts festivals, music festivals, and service providers such as ticketing companies and technical suppliers. Our membership spans from small-medium and not-for-profit organisations to large commercial entities.

LPA has a clear mandate to advocate for and support policy decisions that benefit the sustainability and growth of the live performance industry in Australia.